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FLAMENCA

translated from the
thirteenth-century Provençal
of Bernardet the Troubadour

by

H. F. M. PRESCOTT

Author of:
The Unhurrying Chase
The Lost Fight

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INTRODUCTION

THE thirteenth-century poem to which Raynouard gave the title *Roman de Flamenca* has survived in a single mutilated manuscript in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Carcassonne. Beside a number of single lines scattered through the story the manuscript has lost complete pages here and there. There is a gap of a page after the refusal of Flamenca's mother to sanction her marriage, another after the oath sworn by Flamenca to her husband, and a third in the midst of the description of Guillaume's written and illustrated love-song. But this is not all. Both the first and last pages of the poem are missing, and in them we have lost, not only the original title, but also, probably, the name of the writer, since it was usual for an author of a *Roman* to announce himself and his work in the first few lines, or to add the information as a postscript to the story.

There is in *Flamenca*, however, one possible clue to the writer's name. Though the hero, Guillaume of Nevers, is a paragon of generosity, yet the poet goes out of his way to say that the lord of Algues "would do as much, if he only could," and that his one fault is "that he does not properly value Bernardet—though mind you, Bernardet does not complain." So perhaps it was Master Bernardet who composed *Flamenca* for the amusement of the lord of Algues, and hoped to persuade him to a more solid appreciation of merit by eloquent praises of the virtue of "largesse."

Yet even if Bernardet were the name of the writer of *Flamenca*, the fact means little. There were many troubadours whose name was Bernard, and our Bernardet might have been any one of these, or, equally well, a different Bernard altogether.

If the author of the poem is unknown, the date of its composition is uncertain. The manuscript is written in a late thirteenth-century hand. Raynouard (*Lexique roman*, I. p. 44) claims that the poem must be earlier than 1264, since the feast of Corpus Christi instituted by Pope Urban in that year does not occur in the Calendar of Guillaume and his Flamenca. M. Paul Meyer (*Le Roman de Flamenca*, Paris, 1865, Intro., p. xxi) will have it considerably earlier; he says between 1220 and 1250. M. Charles Revillout (*Revue des langues romanes*, viii. pp. 5–18) has a closer theory. He suggests that the poem was written in the year 1234, since that is the only year in the century whose Sundays and Holy-days agree in date with those of the story, though unfortunately even in this year the lunar dates as quoted by Flamenca and her lover will not come into line with their ecclesiastical Calendar.

But whether Bernardet or another wrote the story that year of 1234, beginning perhaps on May-Eve itself, listening to the nightingale, looking out at the apple-blossom, and counting ahead on his fingers through the whole summer to the Sundays and Holy-days—whether this were so or not, the poem belongs to the thirteenth century and to the south of France, and was written by a man familiar with the sophisticated, witty, beauty-loving Provençal world.

Just because our Bernardet had probably to recite the story himself, it mirrors the tastes of his audience—he was watchful not to bore them, and their tastes were various. So there is the philosophy of love for

the elect, the practice of it for ladies and young men in love; there is talk of feasts for those whom love left uninterested, descriptions of fine clothes and splendid shows to please everyone, and finally, as though he heard the knights beginning to yawn and shuffle their feet, there is a brisk tourney.

But the story is first and last a story of "amour courtois," and entirely founded on the polite convention that a gentleman must be the lover of another man's wife. The king at Paris might be a saint and a Crusader, but in Provence they followed the troubadour fashion of love, and Guillaume of Nevers only went to church to speak to his lady.

And yet even Saint Louis might have laughed at *Flamenca*, if he could have forgotten his saint-ship, for the man who wrote the story was laughing throughout. Archambaut, jealous husband, unwashed and unshaven, is funny, but so is Guillaume, as he sits to be tonsured, while beside him the host sobs, the hostess weeps upon her knees, and the two esquires hide themselves and their emotion in corners —and all because Guillaume's hair is being shorn, that hair that was "brighter than the bright gold leaf that they beat at Montpellier."

It is only now and again that the teasing and the laughter cease, and the tone changes to tenderness and truth—now and again, when "Master Bernardet" speaks of love. Guillaume, because he loves, knows what pity is, and its pain, so that he suffers with Flamenca in her captivity; as for any fortune or happiness that might come to him, he would far rather she had it than he. And Flamenca—Flamenca is a woman. She must give. If there is anything more that her lover could imagine to ask for, she would rejoice.

This tenderness is rare. For the most part the poet

speaks with a persistent, delicate mockery. Perhaps it was this that prevented the poem from ever being popular in its time, for certainly it is never mentioned in any contemporary literature. There were others besides the lord of Algues who did not properly value poor Bernardet.

Note.—Portions of *Flamenca* were first printed by Raynouard in 1838 in *Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits*, XIII. 2me partie. These were reprinted by him, and translated, in the *Lexique Roman*, I. p. 1. The first complete edition with a partial translation was published in 1865 by M. Paul Meyer, who in 1901 brought out the first volume of a second edition, containing the text and a glossary. This latter edition has been used for the present translation, which, though not literal, is an attempt to render as closely as possible both the letter and spirit of the Romance. Occasionally a few lines have been omitted owing to the obscurity or corruption of the text, and the gaps in the story bridged over by a few words.

[*The Count of Nemours called for his vassals, and*] said to them, frankly and openly:

"Now deal honestly with me, and tell me what you think. Suppose God puts a bit of good fortune in my way, will it not profit all my folk besides? For a long time I have wished to have the friendship of Sire Archambaut, and this very day he has sent asking for mine. He has sent a letter sealed with his own ring, and says he will marry Flamenca if I will give her to him. If I say no to him I should be a vainglorious fellow. And yet, on the other hand, the King of the Slavs sends to me saying that if I will give him my daughter he would rather have her than any other. But I do not want to see her turned into a Slav. I had rather she were a simple knight's wife, so that I might see her once a week, or once a month, or even only once in all the year, than have her a crowned queen and see her never again at all. I should be the sorriest father in the world if I were to lose her for ever. But now tell me what you think of it."

They answered:

"Sire, as you have chosen, do not keep Sire Archambaut dangling. There is no better knight bearing sword from here even to the world's end; and he is a true man through and through. Besides, you would get more help from Archambaut, if you needed it, than from the King of the Slavs or the King of Hungary. But talk the matter over with Madame

your wife, and with Flamenca too, for she is full of discretion and good sense. As for us," said they, "we will go away now and wait for you outside the palace."

So the Count sent for his wife, and for Flamenca, and when they came in and sat down by him he spoke to them.

"Dame," said he, "I need your counsel. You know that this pretty girl of mine can have a king as a husband, though indeed it is a great honour to us for him to deign to marry her."

"Sire," cried his wife, "I do not consent. I never will consent. I will die first. How can you even speak of it! Ah! how can you think that I shall send far away my dearest in all the world!"

. . . . . .

[*The Count agreed with his wife, and so he bade Archambaut's messengers return to their master and say that he should have Flamenca.*]

They did not rest for a single day till they came to Bourbon, and there they found Archambaut, very grieved against Robert because he had been so long. But when Robert came in he cheered up mightily and began to ask all about Count Guy, and about Flamenca. And while Robert told him, the knights kept striking in, promising him that she was a hundred times lovelier than ever Robert had said.

When they had told him all that they had done—

"So then," said Archambaut, "these are very handsome terms. I accept every one of them. Robert, you have done well, and as for these knights who have helped you, I am their debtor; they shall have good recompense if I can give it. But come now, the day appointed is not long; we have no great time to make ready. On Sunday we must set out, a hundred knights, no less, and each with four esquires.

We all shall wear the same livery, and they shall ride armed and carrying our colours all embroidered alike on their coats, all young men, and well trained in courtesy. And we shall have saddles and shields all alike, and ride behind the oriflamme." (Lest you should not know, I will tell you that the oriflamme is the great banner of the lord that goes before all to tourneys.) "We shall need 50 sumpter horses too, good stout beasts, and in my company there shall not be a single man on foot."

When everything was got ready Robert sent off a messenger to Count Guy, a man who knew all the roads and passes, so that he wasted no time getting to Nemours. He was a sensible and well-spoken man too, and gave his message very properly to the Count.

Count Guy himself told the news to his son. "It looks to me," said he, "as if we shall have to hold a very great court, and set about it soon, for now there is word from Sire Archambaut telling me that he will be here within the fortnight."

"Fair lord father," answered his son, "do not let that trouble you. We shall be ready in time. And you can do everything lavishly without ever borrowing a penny. Remember all the gold and silver you have laid up; I took tale of your treasure only the other day," said he, "and for five years it has been heaping itself up and never a penny spent till now. So now let us hold such a court as never has been on earth since Adam's day; it is only fitting, seeing that my sister is the fairest maid in all the world and our blood the noblest. And bid to this feast all your friends, and as for your enemies, make peace with them and bid them too; there isn't a knight from here to Germany who will not be more eager to come to your court than to the merriest fight."

"Well, fair son, you shall order the whole business. And be generous, be large. If a man asks you c sous, give him x marks; if he asks you v, give him x. That is the way to get you worship in the world."

"Then, Sire," his son said, "the first thing to do is to let write letters of summons, and send them out by speedy safe messengers, so that all may be able to come to this court from near and far."

That was what they did. They sent out v messengers; Salomon, and Guiot, and Robin, and Girart, and Colin, and these did so manfully that within a week every lord and duke and count in Flanders had word of this great court that was to be held. Meanwhile the Count bade welcome his close friends and made truce with his enemies so that there should be no one absent from the feast.

Nor did Archambaut fail in his part. He arrived three days before the day appointed. The Count and his people received him with honour, and said among themselves that he was a very fine lord.

And so he was, and a pretty fighter too, but when they brought him to Flamenca, and he saw her, his heart caught fire—love poured down his flame upon it, but such a gentle, courteous flame that there was no outward sign of the painful conflagration within. No, on fire inside, Archambaut trembled outwardly as though he had fever, and yet it was not, to my thinking, a fever that he suffered from. But for all that, if there had not been a remedy handy he would have died of it. The remedy, however, was there; no bitter medicine, but very sweet, so sweet and so clear-shining indeed, that the strongest man would have gone lame and maimed all his life long if only one day he might have enjoyed that blissful cure.

But in the meantime Archambaut was in great

distress, and sadly tormented by love. Sunday was far away, and all the time between a martyrdom. He longed for some abbot or priest to give him his medicine on Friday, or even on Saturday. If this had been one of the indulgences that you can buy, he would have paid cash for it in a minute.

On the day after Pentecost the court came together at Nemours, a very rich and splendid court—Lagny and Provins Fairs are nothing to it for grey fur and white and silk and fine wool cloth. From eight leagues round about everybody who was anybody came to it with great ostentation, each one gayer than the man before him. Indeed so great was the gathering of counts and knights and lords and rich and worshipful barons, that many, even men of note, could find no room at all in the town, but had to lie at night in the pleasant meadows round about, and pitch a town of tents there and fine pavilions of all sorts and colours, more than 500 of them—yellow and white and red—careless of rain or wind. When the sun got up he flamed on golden eagles and golden balls at the doors of the tents, so that all the field was full of shining. There was such an army of jongleurs too, that if only they had been as stout of heart as they were strong of voice they would have been the fellows to send out against Damascus. There was no fine cloak or gown which if a man wanted as a gift he could not have, just by saying, "I ask it in the Count's name!"

That was a splendid court. Each man thought himself fortunate the more he might spend and give away in hospitality, and everyone was eager to give to anyone who would accept a gift.

But courts nowadays are not what they were then. Nowadays people very soon think that they have done enough. No wonder Honour declines; nowadays

everyone goes the same way. Which way? I will tell you. They all run after Niggard, who has driven away Worship and her household. Honour, he is dead, and his friend Joy too. And why? 'a God's Name why? Because Self-Respect dies daily now. But does Good Behaviour do nothing to recover her? Lord, no! There's no open-handedness nowadays, but only sharp practice. If you ask anything—even for something as cheap as advice—no one will give it you unless he thinks it will profit himself or his friends, or else harm his enemies. A man's a fool these days who tries to follow youth's way. What's the use of talking? Everyone knows that Love is sick and goes about with a drooping head.

But now for my story.

Early on Sunday morning Archambaut, who had not slept a wink for three nights, was up and ready dressed when the Count came into his room and gave him greeting from Flamenca.

"Fair Sire," said Archambaut, "may God give you all the joy I feel when I hear you speak her name—Flamenca!"

"Well, well," answered the Count, "get up now, and come and see her in her room. She has gifts of musk and amber and jewels of all sorts which she wants to give you."

"Sire, take me to her. Never in all my life have I been so glad to be going anywhere as I am to go to her."

So the Count took him by the hand and led him to Flamenca, who did not seem sorry to see him, but only a little shamefast.

"Here," said Count Guy, "here is your wife, Sire Archambaut. If you want her, take her."

"Sire, if she is willing," answered Archambaut, "never took I anything so gladly."

The maid Flamenca smiled at her father, teasing. "Sire father," said she, "it is very clear that I belong to you since you give me away so lightly. But since it is your will," said she, "it is my will too."

Those words, "It is my will too," made Archambaut so happy that he must take Flamenca's hand and hold it close. Then they parted, but Archambaut knew very well that he was leaving his heart with her, and could not get it back. He went to the door, but his eyes were on her all the time, and they were saying good-bye to her for him. As for Flamenca she was not one of those pert girls who do not know how to be courteous; as he went away she said softly, "God keep you."

Five bishops and x abbots were at the church, all vested and robed. But the length of the ceremony was a trouble to Archambaut, for it was past noon before he was made Flamenca's husband. Yet when he could give her his first kiss he thought indeed he was a king.

When Mass was over they all went to the tables, but this was a game at which no one lost a penny, because the feast was all ready there for them. I shall not stay to tell you much of it, for it would be poor fare for you; only this much—everything was there which could be imagined or devised.

Archambaut and the Count served the guests, but Archambaut's eyes would wander where his heart went, and before dinner was half over he was longing to get up from table. When the jongleurs began, some playing, some singing, he could hardly have borne it, if he had not had the night to look forward to. He thought that they never would have finished their drinking and tippling.

But that night he had his reward when the maid Flamenca became a woman in his arms. He was such

a perfect, practised lover that the most hard-hearted woman would yield in a little to his prayers, and it was easy for him to tame Flamenca so that she did not try to resist him nor put him off with words. Very gently he kissed her, very gently took her in his arms, and he was as careful as he could be not to hurt her tender body; at least, whether she liked it or not, she did not cry out nor once beg for mercy.

The marriage feast lasted more than a week, and the bishops and abbots with their croziers stayed longer than that, but on the tenth day they took their leave, and went away, all very well pleased. Sire Archambaut was a happy man now, for now he had all his desire, and his only care was to serve and please that one whom he longed to honour and cherish. Indeed, if he had not been ashamed to do it, he would have liked to have waited on her at her dressing, and handed her garland and mirror and comb.

But when he saw that the festival was coming to an end, and that it was time to be going, he took leave of his father-in-law. "Sire," said he, "I am going now, for I have to prepare for a court at Bourbon, and there is little time. So I commend you to God, and I pray you send me your daughter at the appointed term."

So Archambaut said his farewells, and back he went to Bourbon, and set about getting ready, for he wanted to make his court so splendid that the other one should be clean forgotten. He sent messengers to the King of France, asking him to honour his court by coming to it, and the Queen with him; and if the King should be pleased to pass by Nemours and bring Flamenca with him, Archambaut would be for ever grateful.

And through all Poitou, and Berry, and even so

far south as the country round about Bordeaux and Blaye and Bayonne, there was no baron who was not bidden by messengers bearing sealed letters; all were bidden, and not one of them let anything stand in the way of his coming.

Then they began to fettle up the town, and hang stuff across the roads, samite and silk, and set benches there, and spread carpets, and stretch tapestries. And to those that would take them, even though they did not ask, there were given gold and silver, cups and spoons and silver tankards, and clothes. To eat there were bustards, swans, cranes, and partridge, ducks, capons, geese, fowls, rabbits, hares, peacocks, and venison, the flesh of the wild boar and of the great fierce bear, and all these in such plenty that you could not wish for more—and nothing at all of the commoner kinds of meat. Every inn Archambaut filled with herbs and civet and wax, as much as they could possibly need; he would not have had them run short for anything in the world. Of spices, incense, cinnamon, pepper, cloves, mace, and saffron he had brought such loads that they were burning them in great braziers at every cross-road in the town, so that when you passed it smelt sweeter than at Montpellier at Christmas time, when the spice merchants are pounding their drugs. V hundred changes of raiment, all of purple enriched with beaten gold, and a thousand lances, a thousand shields, and a thousand mail coats were all got together in one inn, and a thousand horses too. These, Sire Archambaut had ready to give to those that he was going to make knights.

When all this was done, the King set out with a great household, and with him Flamenca. For vi or vii leagues the roads were full of the crowds of his people, and a horse's length in front of them all the

Count's son went spurring, because he wanted to be the first to meet Sire Archambaut, who was coming out to them with a great following. For Archambaut had with him full a thousand knights, and a thousand townsfolk, and a thousand servants, and each one welcomed the king, crying:

"Sire, I have a fair shady trellis—I have a good house—I have a pleasant garden. Sire, grant me a gift—come and lodge with me!"

But to all of them the King said only:

"Do not ask me. I am with Flamenca. But be hospitable to these barons."

"Ah! Sire," cried they then, "these shall be our guests and have everything they want."

So all got their lodging without any fuss or running to and fro, and no goodman shut his door that night. The Queen had pleasant rooms of her own near to Flamenca. There were some who complained because the ladies would not let anyone come to them for a while to pay their courtesy, but the fact was they were tired with riding and with the heat, and when they had rested a little they soon recovered.

As soon as the bell had rung for nones they all went to table, and hungry too. To eat there was fish of all kinds, and everything that one may eat on a fast day, of all sorts, not to mention the fruits that are ripe in June, as pears and red cherries.

At dinner the King sent over to Flamenca a brace of woodcock, and afterwards she thanked him very prettily for his kindness. It was indeed a splendid feast, and nothing lacking except poor beggar folk to give the scraps to.

The next day was Saint John's, a high feast and holy, and they did not miss keeping it. The Bishop of Clermont sang High Mass that day, and preached a sermon about Our Lord who so loved Saint John

that he called him "greater than a prophet." Then, in the King's name he forbade anyone, on any count whatever, to leave the court before the fortnight's end, for so the King had decreed. He was speaking to fools perhaps, but not to deaf folk, and everyone would have been glad to stay for a year; if the King had been willing they would have kept it up till the first frosts.

When Mass was finished the King chose, of all the ladies, to take Flamenca's hand and lead her out from church. After them came full three thousand knights beside as many ladies, and passed all together to the palace where a feast was ready.

There was a great hall there, so great that it was not at all over-crowded when there were assembled in it x thousand knights, and ladies, a great company, and maidens, and esquires, and the servants who followed their masters, and jongleurs to the tune of more than fifteen hundred.

When everyone had washed their hands they sat down, but not on benches though, they sat on cushions covered with silks from the East, and the napkins on which they wiped their hands were not rough scratchy things, but very soft and smooth. How can I tell you all that they had to eat? Nothing was lacking of things made from fine flour, vegetables and grapes and fruits and green fresh herbs; every kind of good thing that grows in the earth or air or in the deep places of the sea was there on the table, and he who got least given him, got enough to keep him too busy to have time to envy those who got more.

Everyone was served with whatever he fancied, and yet, for all that, there were v hundred of them who could do nothing but gaze at Flamenca, and while their eyes devoured her—her lovely smile, her sweet movements, and all her beauty—their mouths

went lacking. God forgive her if their suffering pleased her! But as for them, if they could have contrived to speak one word to her, they would have been willing to go on fasting. However it may be, many of them got up as empty as they sat down.

Among the ladies, not one but would have given worlds to be like her, for as there is no equal to the sun for beauty and great radiance, so Flamenca shone among them, with her flower-like fresh colour, and her sweet eyes of love, and her speech both merry and wise. The fairest, and the best, and the wittiest of them all were dumb before her, and could only own their defeat, and say that when Flamenca was there no one could hope to seem fair. Their beauty grew pale before the fresh and lovely colour that deepened and brightened in her cheeks, and the longer you looked at her, the more beautiful she seemed. Truly God did not spare his travail the day he made that sweet creature!

You may be sure that she was really beautiful when I tell you that other women admitted it, for in all the world you will not find so many as three women whom the others will allow to be of a perfect beauty.

"Oh!" say they, "we know better than you men how to rate a woman's looks. You are satisfied if she is pleasant to you, if she makes much of you, if only she is complaisant. But those who see her when she is not dressed up, who see her when she is going to bed or getting up, they will not, if they have any sense, go and describe that vision to the servants."

That is how they talk for the most part, because for spite they wish to belittle the gifts that Our Lord has given to some favoured women. But Flamenca had nothing to fear from such malice; for want of any foundation for criticism the ladies kept silent about her, but you may be sure that if there had been

anything to find fault with they would not have let it alone.

When the feast was finished they washed their hands again, and then the wine was put on the tables in the usual way. Then the cloths were taken away and to every man, without missing one, they brought cushions to lean upon. Then the jongleurs stood up, each one determined to make his own voice heard, so that the whole hall was full of the notes of all sorts of instruments tuned in dozens of different keys. Every man who had a new tune for the viol, or a song, or a lay, did his best to make himself heard above the rest. One was playing the Lay of the Honeysuckle on a fiddle, another sang of the Faithful Lovers, another the Lay that Ivan made. Here one was playing the harp, another the viol, another the flute, the fife, the rote. One recited to his fellow's music, one played the musette, another the whistle or the bagpipe, or the pan's pipe, or the lute, or tuned the psaltery to the Jews' harp, while here another jerked his marionettes, or juggled with knives, or crawled on the ground, or turned somersaults, or danced capering, or dived through a hoop, or leapt into the air. Each one in fact did his own turn.

Anyone who desired to hear the stories of kings, lords, or counts could have his desire, for one jongleur was telling of Priam, another of lovely Helen whom Paris wooed and stole away; others were singing of Ulysses, of Hector, of Achilles, of Æneas who left Dido broken-hearted, of Lavine who, from a tower-top, shot her letter on an arrow to the sentinel below. One told the story of Apollonice, of Tidiocles and Eteocles, another of Apollonius, or of the King Alexander, or of Hero and Leander. One sang of Cadmus, who, exiled and far from home, founded the city of Thebes; another of Jason and the

sleepless snake; another told of mighty Alcides, another of how Demophoon had his sweet will of Phyllis. One told how Narcissus, that lovely boy, drowned in the well in which he worshipped his own face, others how Pluto ravished Orpheus' fair wife from his side, or of how Goliath the Philistine was slain by the three stones that David threw. One sang the story of Samson whose hair Delilah cut while he slept, another of Maccabeus who battled for the Lord, another how Julius Cæsar, who knew not fear, crossed the sea alone, without ever a prayer to Our Lord. One told the story of the Round Table where always valiant men had honour, and where the king turned away none who came. Another told of Gauvain, and of the lion that went along with the knight who set free Lunete; one sang of the Breton maid who kept Lancelot prisoner when she might not have his love, another of Perceval, or of Gouvernail who travailed so for Tristram, another of Fenice whom her nurse passed off for dead. Another recited the tale of the Fair Unknown, another of the scarlet shield that the herald found by the gate, another of Griflet. One told the story of Calobrenan, another of how he kept Kay the seneschal a year in prison for having insulted him, another of Mordred, another the tale of Count Duret who fled before the Vandals and was given refuge by King Fisherman. One told of Hemmelin's good fortune, another how the assassins do the will of the Old Man of the Mountain. One recounted how Charlemagne held Germany till he divided it, another the history of Clovis and Pepin; others told how through pride Lord Lucifer fell from heaven, or of the young lord of Nanteuil, or of Oliver of Verdun. One sang the songs of Marcabrun, another told of Dædalus who learnt to fly in the air, and of Icarus who drowned because of his

rashness. Each one, singing or saying, did his very best, and that was so good that altogether they made a considerable noise in the hall.

Then the King spoke to the court. He said, "Knights, as soon as the esquires have had their dinner, let saddle your horses, and we will go to the jousts. But meanwhile I would have the Queen begin a dance, and Flamenca, my little sweetheart, and I will dance too. So get up, all of you, and let the jongleurs go aside among the tables."

At once then the knights and ladies and young maids took each other by the hand—there never was such a dancing before in France or Brittany, for two hundred jongleurs, all good musicians, took their fiddles and sat two by two on the benches and played for the dancers with never a false note.

The ladies looked at each other, this way, that way, and in amorous play, while their sighs and their glances showed how they were possessed by this game of enticement. And by this quaint cunning practice Love fulfilled the dances with such pleasure that they thought they were in Paradise, and I assure you, and it is no lie, that there never was such a lovely company brought together since the God of Love was born. They might have come and told the King that Paris and Rheims were taken, and he would not have given over dancing, nor even pulled a long face over it.

Joy and Youth led that dancing with their cousin, lady Prowess. Indeed that day Meanness began to think of burying herself, but Avarice came to her and said, "Woman, what are you doing? Just look at them dancing together! But their silly mirth will soon be over; it isn't St. John's Eve every night. Here they are, crammed with food and capering, but what they waste, another will weep, and there are

allegory

some here who, in a month, will be longing for us two, and regretting what is spent to-day."

Said Meanness with a sob: "Dear God! Dame Covetous, may you be a free suzerain without any over-lord, and have in your fee counts and barons, kings and dukes, clerks and marquises, knights and merchants. As for the ladies, I cannot give them to you, for I have no power over them, and I would give you nothing over which you cannot rightly rule. But if any of them likes to be of your meiny, I shall not be sorry."

By now more than xxxviii esquires had saddled and harnessed the horses with their blazoned bardings and little bells, and then the summons went through the court, and each man sent his esquire for his arms, and parted from the ladies. These—gay, sensible, well-behaved creatures—went up to the windows to watch the knights who were going to joust for love of them.

Archambaut did not waste any time, for he armed nine hundred and lxxxxvii new knights right off. These new knights came afoot to the palace all in hosen of patterned silk, and stood before the King, who, for his gift to them, wished that their heaviest sorrow should be that of love; and the Queen said the same—she gave them no other gift.

That day the King himself bore arms, and I promise you that there were not three knights there more sprightly than he. He carried, bound on the end of his lance, a sleeve—God knows whose!—The Queen made no sign of displeasure, but she knew that a sleeve was no joke, for such a thing is a token and a love gage. She said to herself that if she had known who had given it to the King, it should have cost that woman dear, whoever she might be, with one exception only. In her heart she thought

that Flamenca had given the sleeve. That was not true, but she sent for Sire Archambaut to ask him about it.

Archambaut came with his lance and shield, bearing his colours and device, as knights bear them at a tourney. He got off his horse and bowed to her, and greeted her courteously, and she took him by the hand and made him sit by her in the window.

"Lord Archambaut, things are not well with me, and if you will not counsel me, they will be worse."

"Dame," said he, "God keep you from all harm."

Then the Queen made up her mind. She touched Flamenca, who sat by her, and said, "If you will allow me, dame, I would speak with Sire Archambaut."

"Gladly," answered Flamenca at once, "since you wish it."

In the next window, which was strewn with palms and rushes, sat the Countess of Nevers, not the one with dark hair—her hair was brighter than gold, and it was her greatest treasure. Flamenca came to her, and they began to talk together merrily. The Countess made a cushion of her cloak, and Flamenca sat down and watched the knights below.

As for the Queen, she wasted no time.

"Sire Archambaut," said she, very sad and sorry, "is it not very wrong of the King to carry a love-gage thus, under my very nose? To be honest with you, he is offending against you as well as me."

Archambaut understood that she thought Flamenca had given the sleeve to the King.

"Dame," said he, "by the God we worship I do not think the King is dishonouring you if he tastes the pleasures of love; he is only doing everything which is right and proper. And I myself will be his

fellow in this, so that I may do in right earnest what he only does in gallantry and pure courtesy."

"Sire Archambaut, those are arguments you will need before the month is out."

"Do not be jealous, Madame. You have no cause at all."

But she shook her head. "Don't tell me you are not jealous. You are, and you will be, and very likely not without cause."

"Dame, why talk like this? Do not try to tell me what to do. I know all about these affairs."

Just then there came a jongleur. "Fair lord," said he to Archambaut, "the King wants to belt on the sword of lord Thibaut count of Blois, and lord Thibaut himself has sent me to ask you to be with him. For your friendship's sake do not fail him."

So Archambaut took leave of the Queen, more troubled than he would allow; but that sweet child Flamenca knew nothing of all this. Ah! what wrong the Queen had done—what a wicked thing! She had done her best to take away from Archambaut all rest and peace; she had planted a sting in his heart that could never be cured, except Love cured him, but Love, in his contrariness, only cured him when what he feared was true indeed.

When Archambaut came again to the King, Count Thibaut was armed knight, and with him more than iiii hundred men, all of his kin. But Archambaut was in a bad temper because of the ill news the Queen had told him, so he called an esquire and bade him "Ring to vespers, for it will be quite time for supper by the time the King hears them."

But when the ladies who were watching the jousting heard the bells, "Oh!" they cried, "it is not nones yet, and they are ringing already to vespers. May she lose her lord who gives in while there is a

knight yet in the field! We won't miss this for the sake of vespers."

Meanwhile the King came in, and, knowing what was fitting, he came to Flamenca in the Palace, and took her along with him, and the barons and knights went after, gaily and gallantly leading the ladies to church. High and low they sang their vespers, and when it was done the King brought Flamenca back, and as if in close and familiar love, he laid his hand on her breast.

That enraged the Queen, and Archambaut too, but he made no sign. All came merrily to supper, and there was great plenty for them—wafers, and spiced wine, and roast meat, and fruit, and fritters; and there were fresh roses and violets too, and ice and snow to cool the wine so that it should not keep them awake.

Everyone was weary with the pleasures of the day, and went to bed to sleep till to-morrow. In the morning the new-made knights, wearing their devices, went riding through the streets to the chiming of little bells of all sorts, so that there was a great din.

Meanwhile Archambaut's trouble grew. He was so miserable that he thought he would die of it. However, he tried to comfort himself, blaming the Queen for ever making him suspect Flamenca. He hid his trouble as well as he could, opened his purse wide, gave and spent lavishly, and was glad when his money was taken. The court lasted xvii days, and no one could have said when the best time came, for from day to day it grew more splendid. Lords and rich men wondered where Archambaut got the money from. On the twentieth day the King and all the rest went away. The Queen did not want the court to go on for a month because she was sure that the King was passionately enamoured of Flamenca.

Yet the King did not love her in that manner; on the contrary, when he kissed and embraced her before Sire Archambaut's face, he thought no ill at all, but believed that he was doing him the greater honour.

So they all went away, and everyone thought that he had been very well treated by Archambaut; and as for the jongleurs, even the worst of them had got enough to make him rich if he had not gambled it away.

Sire Archambaut attended all at their parting, but he had a grief at his heart that sent him home again very wretched, for he was tormented by a burning pain that is called jealousy, which drove him hither and thither, and gave him thoughts which he could not escape. When he came back to the house his people left him, thinking he was not sane. In his misery he wrung his hands, and came near to tears. Then he thought that he would go straight to his room and find his wife and beat her, but when he came there she was not alone, for there was a great company of the ladies of the town with her. He was very angry and wretched at that, and turned from them, and flung himself down full length on a bench, and complained as though he had a pain. He was tired of his life and would never have got up from his bed again if he had not feared what people would have said.

He went about dismally and alone, talking to himself. "Alas! what was I thinking of when I took a wife? Wasn't I well off before? Indeed I was. Bad luck to my parents for advising me to take this thing from which no good comes to any man! Now I have a wife—a wife! Alas, it is hard to be tormented by jealousy! And this wench is the cause of it all, and I'm damned if she cares a thing about it! But I will teach her! God! God! what shall I do?"

Certainly he had come to an evil pass; he could finish nothing he set his hand to; he went and came, outwardly burning, while inwardly he felt his heart was broken. When a man is driven wild like this, when his songs turn to bellowing, and his sighs to groans, when he understands nothing, when he mumbles the monkeys' Paternoster so that no one can tell what he is saying—then truly he is jealous. All day long he rated and stormed, and he hated to see strangers. If any came he pretended to be very busy, and muttered to himself between his teeth, "I have hard work not to pitch you out of doors head over heels." He would twist his belt, and go about singing "tulluratu," and dancing to the tune of "vasdoi vaidu." Then he would look up, and peer at his wife, and turn and sign to the servants to bring water to wash because he wished to dine; he did this so that the guests should leave. If he had been a weaver he could not have marched up and down any more, and at last when he could bear it no longer, he would say:

"Fair sire, dine with us, for it is quite time. I shall be very pleased if you will, and you will have an opportunity of making love." Then he would grin like a dog, showing his teeth, but without any mirth.

If he could he would have seen no one, for he thought that whoever came was courting his wife and stealing her away—curse him!—and that when anyone spoke to her he would be running away with her next minute.

"That is how we carry on our intrigues. The King began it early; I believe that even before he left Nemours he knew too much of her. He knew what she was like, and that is why he was so familiar. I never thought of fearing him, or I should have been

able to look after her when he came here; but now, whoever comes or goes, they will not want to come again. Look how she behaves with them. She makes it very plain that she is not mine. God! they have led her into evil. But I won't be their stalking horse any more. Bad luck to the man who serves others and gets nothing for himself.

"It is easy to say that they have led her away! But I do not believe that the King himself could succeed, in spite of his familiarities. Alas! wretch that I am! Alas that I was born! If I cannot keep one woman safe I am not fit to lift the column that is near by St. Peter's at Rome; and I am not much use if I cannot master a little girl like this. Would that she were still a girl, and no wife, for it is because of her that I have lost my wits like this, and all my youth. God! I have done an unlucky thing, and followed foolish counsel. The Queen knew what she was talking about when she said that I should be jealous. Curse her for a witch, for she told me of no remedy. Truly I am more jealous than ever a man was before; I have surpassed everyone else, and of a certainty I shall be a cuckold. But it's no use saying 'I shall be.' For all I know, I may be one already."

Then he would rage against himself, and tear his hair, pluck at his beard, bite his lips, grind his teeth, shiver and burn, and throw horrid glances at Flamenca. He could hardly refrain from cutting off her lovely, bright, shining hair. Said he:

"Dame Falsehood, what is to prevent me from knocking you down, or killing you, or cutting off your hair? Now you wear it in a plait, and next year I expect you will coil it up for fear I snatch it from you. I don't think you will be pleased when I cut it off with a big pair of scissors. These gallants will regret it who come here so as to say to each other,

'Lord! whoever saw such lovely hair! It is more beautiful than fine gold.'

"I know very well all these tricks and signs; clasping of hands and pressing of feet. Whom do you think you will find to do them? I am as good at this game as you are, though it kills me, because I travail while you rest, and there is no bone nor nerve nor muscle in me that does not suffer by your wickedness. But I could not bear that you should escape your share of trouble."

Then she would say, "Sire, what is the matter?"

And he, "What, you answer me! Christ! Christ! alas that I married you! I am dying and you mock me. That is what these gallants have done to me. But by the Lord! they shall not find the door open. A man who tries to guard his wife is wasting his time unless he locks her up somewhere so that no one can see her except he who ought to have her and keep her. Then he will find it easy to hold her.

"Alas! wretched unfortunate! Now you are a jealous madman, mangy and shaggy and rough. Your hair is all matted and must look to Flamenca like a wild squirrel's tail. You have disgraced yourself and your lineage; but I do not care; I would rather die than suffer the disgrace of putting up with too much; I would rather everyone called me jealous than to wear the cuckold's horns."

So now, throughout the country, everyone knew that Sire Archambaut was the perfect jealous husband. They made songs and ballads through all Auvergne of how he kept Flamenca, and you may imagine that when they came and sang these to him, it did not help his ill temper.

If any of his friends blamed him, he did not thank them for their advice, but he would answer furiously:

"Sire, I hear what you say, and I understand per-

fectly. But as God saves me, why should any take it amiss if I am jealous? I know very few who would not be jealous for the same reason. They who mock at me would be worse than I, if all day long they had before them so lovely a creature. I know no emperor nor king that I envy of his wife, and I know that my complaints against her are not foolishness. But a wise man should be on the look-out for danger before it arrives. And what should I do if some rascal comes, talking of courteous loving, and not knowing even the meaning of love, and leads her into folly? You will not believe me, but nevertheless I tell you, I would not have that happen for the world. What should I say for shame? My service and my care would have been wasted. But now let anyone come; he shall not see her, he shall never have a chance of talking to her without me there,—no, not though it were the Count her father, or her mother, or sister, or Jocelin her brother."

Then when his friend had gone off, not best pleased at all this, Archambaut would be talking to himself:

"This fellow blames me, but he ought really to praise. He does not know how to do anything but scold. He thought he had said a very fine thing when he called me jealous, but all the same I prefer my own folly to his wisdom. He is a fool to scold me; he should rather say, 'Fair lord, take care that your property (I mean my lady Flamenca) does not get the better of you by flattery, and so do all she wishes.'

"If he had said no more than that it would have been enough, but he never said a word of it, and only talked idly like a fool, telling me I was jealous. But anyone who thinks me so is a fool, and I should be a fool to believe him. By the Lord! he does not know much about it. But now I have been so made mock

of in my own house that I shall not recover from it this winter."

At that he jumped up and went away as quick as he could, with his hair all on end and his gown flying out as if he were dancing "The Peasant" when the dance goes fastest. He came in great haste to the tower, and found Flamenca sitting there with a very fair company of women. Then the jealous creature nearly burst with rage, and said:

"I know someone not far away who deserves to suffer," and then went out on to the stairs; but he fell down head over heels and nearly broke his neck.

And now look at him scratching his head, and scratching his neck, pulling up his breeches, tugging at his shoe. He sits down and gets up, ruffles up his hair, yawns and then crosses himself and says, "In the Name of God, that is a sign of good luck." He comes in to look for his belt and goes marching up to his wife, and then says, "I am a mad fool. No other man has a wife like mine.—And you say you don't know how to keep her safe?—I don't.—I do.—How?—Beat her.—How will beating help me? Will she be the better and more obedient for it? No, rather she will be the worse and the more bitter against me, for I have always heard that beating was no cure for folly, but that, on the contrary, scolding and chastisement prick on a foolish heart, and when Love enforces neither wall nor tower will avail to prevent a heart from getting its desire sooner or later.

"Well, let anyone think so who cares; I will follow another counsel. I will keep her well from cold, from hunger, and from the burning sun, and curse me if I do not keep her from all other men since I love her so. I will employ no other guardian than myself, for I shall find none more faithful even

in heaven. That is all I have to do; I have plenty to eat and drink, and I am weary of chivalry; I will rest and grow fat, for an old man ought to rest.

"But I should rest better if I had not got this trouble, for an old man cannot rest when he has a young girl to guard. But if I can, I will keep her safe; I will use both force and craft, and this shall be my only occupation. My tower is big, and the walls are strong—I will keep her locked up there with one maid of her own, or two, so that she is not alone, and may I be hanged by the neck if she goes out without me, even to the church to hear Mass; and there she shall only go on great festivals."

He did not delay any longer then, but came to the tower bringing a mason with him, and he made this man make a little hatch, as if for an anchoress, looking through into the kitchen; Archambaut did not rest till he had accomplished all he intended.

Jealousy had bereft him of all sense and feeling, and he grew no better of it, but rather worse every day. He left his head unwashed and his beard unshaved, so that he looked like a badly made sheaf of oats. He kept pulling bits of hair out of his beard and chewing them in his mouth, and when he had a very bad attack of jealousy he would run about like a mad dog; and, indeed, a jealous man is not sane. All the clerks of Metz would not be enough to write down his words and his behaviour. Truly, I might say that even Jealousy herself does not know how to be as jealous as he was; but I will leave the rest of this to the jealous; there are always some of them doing wild things and behaving like mad.

Flamenca, the sweet thing, did not know what to do, for she had to suffer such tyranny and threats from her jealous husband that her life was worse than death. If the days were bad, the nights were worse,

for she found nothing then but weariness, and no comfort anywhere.

She had two very good maids, but they were unhappy too because they were locked up in prison. But they were courteous and intelligent and did what they could to comfort her, and in their love for her they forgot their own distress. The Jealous one came and went often, with the keys in his hand; he never rested, but went round the tower and about, looking and watching and spying.

The two maids served when they ate and drank, for Archambaut had everything necessary for the meal put at the hatch before they began. After dinner he went out, as if to take the air, but you must not think that he went far. Not he! He stayed very close by, for he went into the kitchen and from there watched all that his wife did. Often he saw her cut the meat herself, and the bread, and give it graciously to her maids, and wine and water in the same way. He had made the cook understand that he must say nothing of this spying.

One day it happened that the wine ran short when the maids were eating. They had no idea they were watched, and so one of them got up and fetched the wine, which was at the hatch, and saw Sire Archambaut hidden in the kitchen. Having seen this she went away, and told it to her lady.

The name of this girl was Alis—the best girl in the world—and the other was called Margarida, a most excellent young woman. Each did all in her power to honour and please her lady.

But Flamenca was in great misery. Angry and sorrowful she sobbed and wept and yawned for the anguish that she suffered from her jealous husband. But God did her so much grace in that she neither loved anyone, nor had she a child; her case would

have been pitiful indeed if she had loved, and been unable to satisfy her love.

And never would she have loved at all, had not Love, for his own pleasure, shown her privately, and at the right time and place, how to play his game. But for a long time Flamenca lamented over herself as over one dead.

She never went out of doors except on festivals or Sundays, and no knight nor clerk might speak with her now, for in church her husband made her stand in a dark corner with walls on each side, and in front he had a high screen put up that came to her chin. There she and her maidens stood, and the Jealous one with them too if he chose, but he liked to stay outside like a leopard or a bear, looking very crafty.

When the gospel was read, if it was a bright morning, and if you were near, and if you looked hard, you could see the lady; but she did not come out for the offertory—Archambaut made the priest come to her. And you must not think that she kissed the priest's hand, except properly covered, and she did not give her offering, but Archambaut did it for her. He did not allow her to uncover her face, or to take off her gloves, so that priest never saw her, not even at Easter or Rogation-tide.

But the little clerk who gave her the Peace, he was the one who could have seen her, if he had had the wit or the sense.

After Mass Sire Archambaut would go out, without waiting for nones, and calling to the maidens:

"Come out. Come out. I am going to dine at once, so do not keep me waiting please," and leaving them no time for their prayers.

So two years and more passed, and their distress

increased day by day, while all the time Sire Archambaut complained and grumbled.

Now there were at Bourbon very fine baths, where anyone, either of the town or a stranger, could very comfortably bathe. In each of the baths you found a writing telling what were the properties of the bath, and no cripples nor lame came there but they went away home quite cured if they stayed long enough and took the right amount of baths. You could bathe there when you liked, and no one would take your turn when once you had made arrangements with the owner of the bath. In each of the baths hot water welled out so hot that it boiled, and from another side came cold water with which to cool the hot. The baths were a certain cure for any disease, and each of them was well roofed and enclosed with walls like a house, and within there were private rooms where one could lie down and get cool at leisure.

There was one of these baths, the best and most comfortable, which belonged to a man who was a close friend of Sire Archambaut, and Archambaut used often to bathe there because it was near to his house. The man's name was Peire Gui, and he always kept his baths in good order, well swept and clean, and no one bathed there except rich people.

Sire Archambaut bathed here without paying anything at all, and he would bring his wife when he wanted to do her a favour, or to please her by a kindness. But this kindness lasted a very short time, for before she came out of the baths, before even she undressed or took off her shoes, he would look about in all the corners, and at last go away like a cur that is driven out of doors snarling, and then runs off to hunt for a bone.

He would lock the door of the bath every time with a big key which he took with him, and then he would go and wait outside. When it was time for Flamenca to come out she would tell her maids to ring a little bell which hung inside the baths; then Sire Archambaut would come and open the door, and he would say, with a ferocious look:

"So you *are* coming out this year! I had thought of giving you some good wine that Peire Gui has sent me, but I am so angry that I have changed my mind, and sent it up to the house. I suppose you think you have been no time! We ought to have had our dinner by now. You shall not bathe more than once a year, I can promise you, if you are as long next time as you have been this."

Then he would look round the baths again to see if there was anyone in them, for he could not believe his eyes that there had not been someone hidden in one of the corners.

Alis would answer him, saying:

"Lord, our lady would have come out sooner, but she waited for us. We attend her when she is in the bath, and afterwards we bathe. That is why we have been so long, and it is all our fault."

"Oh, well!" said he, and bit his fingers. "You are fonder of water than geese are, the big and the little of you. But I don't wonder at you."

Alis looked sidelong at her mistress then, and said:

"Sire, as for you, you bathe oftener than we do, and stay in longer," and then she laughed, because she knew it was a lie, for never since he took a wife had Archambaut bathed, nor so much as thought of it. He thought he had done enough when he went into the bath his wife had left. He had not cut his nails either, nor his hair, nor would he shave his whiskers for anything, so that he looked like a Greek

or a Sclavonian captive, and all this for pride and spite. "For," he thought, "my lady will be more afraid of me if she sees me bearded and whiskered, and she will not be so eager to take a lover."

Now at this time, when Archambaut had grown jealous, and rough and wild, there was living in Burgundy a knight upon whose making and fashioning Nature had lavished all her care. Nor were her efforts for his production and instruction wasted, for he was indeed the most excellent young man with all the proper instincts, and so sensible, so handsome, and so noble that Absalom and Solomon put together were nothing to him. Even Hector and Paris and Ulysses all rolled into one would not have come anywhere near him for courage and beauty and wisdom. He was indeed so beautiful that it is hard to describe him, but I will try to tell you a little about his appearance, as well as I can.

His hair was golden, crisp and curling; his brow was white, smooth and broad; his eyebrows black, arched, thick, and long; his eyes were big, grey in colour, and merry; his nose well shaped, straight as a cross-bow shaft, and long, and comely. His face was so freshly coloured that the May morning's opening rose is not brighter nor fairer than his cheeks, where white and red were mingled together in the jolliest colour ever seen. His ears were of a good shape, firm, and rosy red; his mouth was pleasant and fine, and charming in speaking, and his teeth were whiter than any ivory. As for his chin it was good, and the better for a small cleft. His neck was straight and strong and moulded with never a bone or a sinew showing to spoil its shape, and his shoulders were very broad, and as mighty as Atlas had, with great muscles and strong arms too. His hands were big and hard and powerful, with long fingers and small

joints. He had a broad chest and narrow hips; his thighs were strong, shapely and well-covered, with round haunches; his legs were well-made, long, straight and slim; his feet arched and elegant. In fact there never was such a fellow.

This man as I have described him in his outward appearance was educated in Paris in the Kingdom of France. There he learnt so much of the vii arts, that he could have set up school. He could sing and read in church, if he chose, better than any clerk. His master's name was Dominic, and he taught him to fence so well that no man's guard was any use—he always found a way through it. There never was his equal, so handsome, so noble, so gifted, such pure gold right through. He was vii feet tall, and he could reach with his foot a candle or a candle-end set on the wall two feet above his head, so lithe he was.

When he was only xvii years and i day, he was made a knight. His uncle the duke knighted him, and gave him dcc pounds, and the King another m pounds, and the Count of Blois another, his brother mccc, and the Emperor m marks, while the King of England who was his cousin gave him m pounds sterling. All of this he invested in land and rents so that it could not possibly be lost. He was brother to the Count of Nevers, and you may be sure that when he came to his court, he did not come alone.

His mind was entirely set on frequenting courts and following courtesy, and all his money was spent that way. His gifts didn't smell at all of a bargain, for if he made a promise and did not fulfill it at once he was miserable about it, and you know that if you keep anyone waiting too long for a promised gift, it isn't giving at all—it's more like selling. But if, on

the other hand, the gift follows hard on the heels of the promise, it is worth twice as much again. So then, seeing that a gift quickly given has such increase that it is worth two, and seeing that to receive promptly makes a man forget the embarrassment of asking—then, truly Guillaume's gifts must have had a pleasant savour, for he liked to give even before he was asked.

He knew too how to make presents gracefully; in fact everything he did brought him reputation. Courts and Kings, marquises and dukes were delighted with him—the man who did not like him after the mere recital of his virtues, and without ever seeing him or receiving anything at his hands, was a poor creature. You could not draw the long-bow when you talked about him, for the truth went beyond all words. In a whole year you could not have written down as much as he did in a day. Oh, what delight, what happiness for those ladies who could see him, and talk with him about Love.

He was a good fighter too, and led a great following with him to tourneys, and took men, and won horses, and then spent it all or gave it away. When he rode at the joust no one could keep the saddle against him, but he lifted men out of their stirrups and carried them along as he chose. He never used a mace at all, for his arm was so strong and his hand so heavy that when he struck with all his force the man was dead before he knew what had happened to him.

His delight was in tourneys and jousts, and in ladies, and games, and dogs and hawks and horses, and in all the pleasures that a knight loves. He was indeed so excellent a knight that there could not be a better. His name was Guillaume, and his surname "of Nevers." As for songs and lays and verses of all

sorts, he knew more than any jongleur. Compared with him Daniel himself, who knew a thing or two, would have cut a poor figure.

All innkeepers sang his praises, for however much they overcharged and fleeced him, when he left he paid them more even than they asked; so naturally when they saw him coming they bustled round to make ready a lodging for him.

A great number of people profited by his coming. No jongleur could be in trouble while he was there, for he kept them from cold and hunger, and so they all loved him—and reason good, for he gave them clothes, and horses to ride on.

But the Lord of Algues would do as much if he only could, and indeed, to be just, you must admit he is every bit as good as Guillaume, for he does all that he can and often more than that. I give you my word I have known him, a hundred times a year, give away, in one day, his whole year's rent. I will not say more in praise of him, but only this:—except that he does not properly value Bernardet—though mind you, Bernardet does not complain—you could not speak too well of him.

Guillaume of Nevers loved God and his neighbour, both priests and laymen. He did not give away bread and water as they do at hospitals; he gave fine clothes and barded horses, and money for a man to spend and be jolly, and to live on at ease for a month or two; and the host would never so much as mention the bill, for he was quite sure that it would be paid as soon as ever Guillaume the Courteous came back that way for a war or a joust. Guillaume the Courteous! Why, he was so overburdened with virtues that a thousand knights might have shared them out, and each one passed for a very fine fellow. And besides being so noble and graceful in body, his

mind was so quick and powerful that there was nothing so difficult but it was easy to him.

As yet he had not gone into the question of Love —at least, not so as to know about it at first hand. He knew very well, however, what Love does, for he had read every book that has been written about Love, and about how lovers must behave, and he understood perfectly well that he could not go on for long leading the life that is proper to youth unless he became a lover himself. For this reason he was determined to engage his heart in a love affair that would bring him honour and happiness. He was quite resolved upon this point.

And now he heard many people talking of Flamenca, and how she was kept prisoner, shut away from all the world, and how she was the noblest, the loveliest, the most excellent lady alive. He began to think in his heart that perhaps he might love her, if only he could see her.

It was while he thought this that Love came sidling up to him, merry and friendly, and promising good fortune. Love began to talk, and reason, and preach to him, and to assure him that there is none so subtle, none so full of wiles as Love. Said Love, "I know that you have had your future told by lots and spells, but still you do not know what a rich delight I am hoarding for you in a certain tower. It is for you that this treasure is kept locked up. Listen to me, and I will tell you

"There is a jealous fool who has shut up the loveliest girl in the world, and the most fittest for love's delight, and it is you, it is you who shall set her free, for you are both knight and clerk too. So now you must seek for . . ."

. . . . . .

(So Guillaume set off at once to find his lady, and)

that night he slept in a lodging within 15 leagues of Bourbon. But Love assaulted him, giving him neither peace nor truce, whispering here, and whispering there, so that whether he waked or slept, Guillaume heard him, close at his ear, crying, "Get up! Get up! You lie too long."

Now for Love to press anyone so hard, he must needs catch him alone. Armed and at a tourney, with blows to give and take, Guillaume would have clean forgotten all about Love, I can tell you. And that is why they say—and it is the truth—that it is good living and leisure that let in Love. If anyone doubts it let him think of Ægisthus, who proved it so, if you are to believe the poem. Be done with idleness, and you're done with Love. The man's a fool who thinks that he can be at ease and have his leisure at pleasure, and yet be safe from Love. But if you want to take Love and hang him, or at least hold him bounden, then up and be doing! There is a proverb—Love soon gets a lazy man.

So there was Guillaume in a sad way. Love fed him on false pretty dreams, making him love a girl he had never even seen. At one moment he thought that he would go to a good diviner to have his fortune told, but on the other hand he did not want to do that, for too certain a hope is less sweet than one that is seasoned with fear.

Next morning at dawn Guillaume got up—no need to waken him—and all that day he did not once lie down again to rest. His esquires were up too, and had saddled the horses and trussed all up, and now had only to wash.

Guillaume went off to church to pray, and this was his prayer, said over and over: "Fair Lord God, grant me good fortune, defend me from evil and sorrow, and give me good lodging to-night."

He came back to the inn to take his leave, and found his esquires dining on roast meat and fine fresh bread and wine. The host begged him to take just a mouthful before leaving, but all he answered was:

"Host, I do not want to eat, I do not want to waste the time. But these two lads are young and must eat early in the day—no shame to them."

So he saluted the host, and mounted, and rode on alone.

The host helped the esquires till they had got everything on to the horses, and then the lads followed their lord quickly until they caught him up. They met no one of whom they could ask the way, because they were the first to go out of the town, but they knew the way well because they had been here before.

Guillaume rode very pensive, and glad that no one spoke to him. They came to Bourbon at the hour of nones, and Guillaume inquired at once which was the best inn, and the most honest host. The man he asked said that Peire Gui was counted the worthiest man in the town, and his wife's name was Bellepile. He showed Guillaume the house.

At the door, on the steps, the worthy man was sitting. When he saw Guillaume he got up, and Guillaume saluted him politely.

"Sir," said he, "I wish to lodge with you if you please, for I am told that in this town there is no worthier man, neither knight, burgess, nor servant."

"Lord, people will talk. But I can assure you that you would not fare amiss if you stayed with me for x years; and here is the inn at your service. There are enough stables and rooms for a hundred knights."

"Sir, I thank you," said Guillaume, and went in, and lodged there.

The hostess was not like Raimberge, but was a proper, comely woman, intelligent and gracious, and she could speak Burgundian, French, German, and the Breton tongue. As soon as she saw Guillaume, so tall, so courtly, she was sure that he was some great man, and at once she asked his esquires his name.

"Dame, his name is Guillaume the Valiant."

"Lord, you are welcome. You have grown betimes, for I have never seen a man so young and so well grown. Happy is the mother who bore you and the nurse who suckled you! But you have not dined yet, and everything is ready in the house. The host is coming in now, for we have not dined, but there will be enough for you and for us, if no one else comes in. By custom, every great man who comes here must eat with us, for the first day at least, and afterwards if he pleases."

"I will surely do what you wish," said Guillaume, "and what is customary."

"Sire, I thank you. Now wash."

The esquires had stabled the horses and stowed all the harness and brought away the key with them. Here they were well lodged and comfortable; they had plenty to eat and drink, and a host to be thankful for.

And now let anyone who likes think about love, for now is Guillaume very close to the tower where she lies who has his heart in her keeping. But for a long time yet that captive will not know that she holds captive the heart of this man who rejoices when he can see, from where he sits at meals, the tower that holds the creature he so loves.

And as for Guillaume, the more he eats, the more he hungers to come there where his heart is. This sort of hunger is never satisfied, for it is deeper than

the abyss itself, and that every man who desire knows well, and especially when his longing for the joys of love sharply pains him.

When he had eaten and washed his hands Guillaume went to see the baths, and the rooms of the inn. "You shall have this room," said the host as they went, "or this one, if you like it better."

But Guillaume wanted one thing only, and that was a window from which he might look out and see the tower where Flamenca was. So when he found what he wanted, he said:

"This is the one for me. This one is bigger than the others, and more pleasant."

"Very good," answered the host. "You will be quiet here, and free to do whatever you like. Count Raoul often has this room when he comes to Bourbon, but it is a long time since we have seen him here, for my lord is sadly changed; and he used to be such a proper man too. But since he took a wife he has never put on helm or hauberk. He cares nothing now for whatever people say. You must have heard the talk about him?"

"Host," said Guillaume, "I have heard, but I have other things to think about. I have a disease upon me, and if the treatment here does not cure me I shall not know what to do next."

"Lord, you shall have everything you ask for, and I pray God of his mercy to grant you joy and health. And I will tell you this—that never a one comes to our baths, however sick and sorry, but he goes away cured, provided he takes the baths properly."

The room Guillaume had chosen was pleasant, and clean and well kept, with a bed and a chimney and everything you could want. He had his baggage brought in and bestowed. When the host, who knew his place, had gone away, Guillaume admon-

ished his young men not to play the fool in any way. He also told them on no account to give any information about him, but only to say that he was from Besançon. Let neither of them have to be told what was their duty to do, but let them see that the food was good and plenty. Let each do the other's bidding, so that each should be at once master and man. Let each show other honour, for every day they should take their meals with the host. And let them not care for the cost, but only that the food should be enough, and good. And each should remember courtesy and think how to serve as best he might, for service and good sense gets friendship and rewards, and profits a man all his life. As they say, "Think of yourselves. Think of me!"

"Sire," said they, "we will do as you say."

It was then the Saturday after Easter, the time of the year when the nightingale sings, reproaching those who neglect to love. By chance that morning an oriole sang in the wood close to the room where Guillaume lay awake, not able to sleep a wink—he had not closed his eyes all night, for all that the bed was large and soft and white.

Once upon a time he had been a free man, but now he knew he was no better than a bond-slave. And he cried out on Love: "Ah! Love! ah lord!" said he, "what will become of me? What are you doing to this knight of yours? Only the other day you promised me that your counsel was good. It would be just as well if you did not keep me waiting too long. I have done what you told me; I have left my home and come into this country like a wandering stranger that no man knows. Every minute I sigh and suffer, tortured by desire. It is true that just now I pretended to be a sick man, but if I have to go on bearing this torment, I soon shall not need

to pretend. Torment! It is no torment, but the sweetest thing in the world to me.

"But never in my life before have I, in health, suffered such pain. And yet there is a proverb which says, 'Suffer it well—to your profit. Suffer it ill—to your loss.'

"Love, I cry out to you, and I cry in vain, for you will not hear me. You might at least say one word to give me a little comfort. But yet you are right and I am wrong, because I am too easily cast down. A lover ought to have a heart harder than the diamond stone, for that is composite, but a lover is simple and single-hearted, and therefore, according to the teaching of the Arts, he is the stronger. For the elements endure because they are simple, but composite things break because contraries shatter each other. But Love is, like an element, simple and pure, bright and shining, and of two hearts it can make one, if it is found equally in each. If it is not found equally, it cannot long last, for that heart in which there is less will admit a contrary, because, of necessity, its space must be filled. Therefore the love which is there will not last, because it is a small part only, and a part will not last because love in its nature is such that it will not suffer any companion in the heart, and if one is admitted, then it dies, or love. Love will have the whole heart to itself, and then it lasts for ever. Love is not like a sauce; if it is, then you may know that it is false, for I have called it single and pure because it admits no mixture.

"And now," said he to himself, "I shall get up, for the morning light has come, and I do not rest though I lie still abed."

So he got up and crossed himself, and prayed to Saint Blaise, Saint Martin, Saint George, Saint Genesius, and v or vi saints more who had once

been knights and gentlemen, asking them to obtain for him the mercy of God.

But before he began to dress he opened both windows, and looked out towards the tower where she was for whom he sighed, and he addressed it, humbly and with much feeling.

"Dear Lady Tower," he said, "you are fair outside, but inside you are pure clear light. Would God I were within your walls, but so that neither Archambaut should see me, nor Margarida, nor Alis."

At these words his arms fell to his sides, his feet faltered, his colour fled, and his strength failed him. One of the esquires, who saw him, thought he was fainting, and caught and held him in his arms, and carried him to the bed. It is not often that you see a man so quickly overcome by Love.

The esquire was very frightened, because he could not feel any life in Guillaume's pulse, but it was only that Love had carried off his soul to the tower where Flamenca lay, never dreaming that there was one who loved her so. There Guillaume held her in his arms, and wooed her, and caressed her so softly that she did not even know it. If she had known who it was that held her so tenderly in his dream, and if her jealous husband could have fallen into such a swoon that he would never have wakened from it, who can tell what sweet delight they would have tasted then in anticipation. For if this felicity of the spirit could have been shared, there would, I do think, have been a joy in it, for to desire, and to hope—though hope's a cheat—and to imagine what has not been and never will be—all this is like a shadow of true pleasure.

When, therefore, Guillaume's soul had fulfilled the will of Love, it came back to his body, and its coming was like the coming of day. For before his

eyes opened, all his face shone; that was the dawn. Then he opened his eyes, and it was full noon; for his face was freshly and beautifully flushed, and fairer than it had been before his swoon, so that it was clear that his soul had been in some pleasant place.

But the young man had wept so much that Guillaume's face was all wet with his tears, and, said he as he wiped his eyes: "Lord, you have been fast asleep, and I was very much afraid."

Said Guillaume, "You have been weeping over my joy." And that is why they say, and rightly, "Your grief's my jest."

In his shirt and breeches Guillaume sat down then by the window on a green cloak furred with grey. The tower was on his right hand, and no one could steal it away while he was getting his shoes on. He didn't wear old shoes, or slippers, but fine, pointed boots made at Douai; he would not have put on shoes of cloth for anything.

Again and again he sighed, and said, "What a sin to shut her up like this! Ah! sweet soul. Ah! gentle, courteous, and gracious. Ah! thou fulfilled of every virtue, do not let me perish before my eyes have once beheld you!"

Then he called for his gown, and the esquire brought it at once—that lad was as wise as a bee and as active and quick as a weasel or an ant. He brought water in a basin, and Guillaume washed, and then laced his sleeves elegantly with a silver bodkin, and put on a cloak of black silk, and tried how he looked with the hood drawn on as they are worn coming from the baths

Just then in came Peire Gui. "Fair Sire," said he, "good day to you and God keep you. But how early up you are! There is more than an hour yet before

Mass, because they have put it later for the sake of Madame, who wants to be there."

Guillaume sighed. "Good host," said he, "let us go to the church all the same. We can say our prayers, and then go out and enjoy the air until the bell rings."

"Fair Sire, I will not say no to that, nor to anything else you wish."

Now Guillaume had in his baggage a new belt, never used, with a buckle of French work, that weighed easily a mark of silver.

Guillaume presented it to the host, who made a polite bow.

"Lord," he said, "you are giving me a great gift. I shall have to think how I can show my gratitude. You have given me too much. Anyone can see what a beautiful belt it is, and the great buckle, and the leather—real Irish leather. It is worth a fortune in this country. I would rather have it so than made of gold."

This host was a very good fellow, and he had not lost anything by his marriage, for whatever happened he could count on his wife to look after the inn.

So Guillaume and he went off to church together, but their thoughts were very far apart, for Guillaume was thinking of nothing in the world but of his love, and the host was thinking of money-making, and of getting the baths ready, because he was sure that this guest would want to take them in the morning.

Into the church Guillaume went, and knelt down before Saint Clement's altar, and prayed God most devoutly, and Madame Saint Mary, and Saint Michael and All Saints to help him. He also said two or three Pater Nosters and a short prayer that a holy hermit had taught him. This prayer was made up of the seventy-two Names of God as they are spoken in Hebrew and Latin and Greek. It renews and streng-

thens a man in the love of God, and makes him daily more worthy. Everyone who repeats it, and believes it, is rewarded of God, and no one who trusts in it heartily, or who carries a written copy of it about with him, comes to a violent death.

When he had said this prayer Guillaume took a psalter and opened it, and the verse he came on filled him with joy, for it was, "Dilexi quoniam?" "Ah!" said he softly to himself, "God knows what it is I want."

He kept his eyes on the ground reverently, but before he left the church he took a good look at the place where his lady would sit when she came there, but he never dreamt that they would keep her prisoner even in church.

"Well, Sire," said the host, "you do know your prayers well. We have an altar here, very holy, with powerful and precious relics. But doubtless you have seen it already as you are so well up in these things."

"I may be well up in them," said Guillaume, "but it isn't much use or profit to me now that I can read my psalter well, or sing the responses, or read the lesson from the book."

"Sire, you might well be proud of it," said the host. "Now if my lord were the pleasant man he used to be, he would give you an honourable welcome to Bourbon. But jealousy has done for him. And yet we know that he is jealous without cause, for his wife is the gentlest, sweetest creature a man could have, and full of kindness to all who come near her. It's dreadful. He is sick to death with jealousy —even in church he keeps her hidden behind that screen."

Said Guillaume, "He must be mad. And very likely it will all be in vain. But it's not my business. He is very welcome to do as he chooses."

They crossed the square and went outside the town into a garden, where a nightingale was wantoning, rejoicing in the sunshine and the fresh green leaves. Guillaume flung himself down in the cool shade of a blossoming apple tree. The host saw that he was pale and thought it was because of the disease he had spoken of the day before. He prayed God earnestly that He would give him health, and all his desire.

But Guillaume was listening to the nightingale, and not to anything the host might be praying. Truly Love knows how to take from a man both hearing and speech, and to make him look a fool when he thinks he is most wise. So Guillaume neither heard, saw, nor felt; his eyes were fixed, and his lips speechless because of the delight that pierced his heart at the song of the nightingale. Because of this he was blind, deaf, and dumb, his ears closed to everything but this sweet pleasure which penetrated to his heart. For the heart is the lord of the body, and so each of the senses repairs there to share in joy or sorrow and to know the will of the heart, and while they are all there together within, outwardly the man is deprived of sense and understanding. And since either good or ill calls them inward thus, I do not wonder that the joy of love, which is mingled delight and pain, sends them hurrying back to their lord who summons them. And each of the senses, when any other has a duty to perform, does not interfere, but does everything it can to help, so that all have only one object at once. And that is why a man who is very intent on something neither sees, nor feels, nor speaks, nor hears, and if you touch a person who is in this state—gently of course—he will not feel it. Everyone knows for himself that this is true.

But the bell began to ring, and the nightingale ceased and was silent.

"Lord," said the host, "it is time for us to be gone to Mass."

Guillaume heard him because he was not dreaming now, and he answered, "At your service. And I want to be in church before Mass begins and before it is crowded."

"We shall be early," said the host, "and we will go into the choir, for I can read and sing a little though not very well."

"My dear host, God bless you! Why did you not tell me before? For friendship I will sing with you, for I can do it pretty well."

They both went together then to the church, and on the way every man and woman said, "God keep you!" to them, for it is the custom at Easter-time to greet everyone unasked. When they got to the church they went into the choir, and from there, through a hole, Guillaume could look out without anyone seeing him.

He waited for the moment when Flamenca should come in, and he was sure that he would recognise her at the first sight of her; and so he would have done if it had not happened that she was holding the veil before her face.

So, since her face was covered, he did not see her as he had longed to, but if she had only known that she had such a lover in the church it would have taken more than the presence of the Enemy to prevent her finding some opportunity of letting him see her mouth; or at least she would have lowered her veil a little so as to discover her eyes. Neither fear nor pride would have kept her from crossing herself with her hand uncovered, or from looking here and there till she saw him who was dying for love of her.

As for Guillaume, he was in a state of great

emotion because he was about to see her. At every shadow that moved across the doorway of the church he thought that Archambaut was coming in.

When all were in their places, and the third bell had sounded, last of all—("And devil take the lot of you!") fierce and shaggy, and wild, in came the Adversary—a perfect scarecrow! It only wanted a boar spear to make him one of those figures that the peasants in the hills make out of old clothes to scare away the stags.

Beside him was lovely Flamenca, keeping as far as she could from the husband who was so cruel to her. She stopped a moment in the doorway, and did her reverence very devoutly. It was at that moment that Guillaume saw her for the first time, at least as well as he could see her, and he kept his eyes fixed on her, miserable because he could not see her as well as he would.

Then said Love to him, "There she is, there she is, that she whom I am contriving to deliver. And you must contrive too, but all the same you must not stare at her now so hard that people will notice it. I will show you how to cheat that low fellow, that fool, that jealous ass, who had been better if he had never been born; and I will give you your revenge for that veil."

So Guillaume turned away his eyes, because just then the lady went into her recess and knelt down. Then the priest said:

"Asperges me."

Guillaume answered with the "Domine," and went through the whole verse better than it had ever been done in that church.

The priest came out of the choir, with a little lad after him carrying the holy water. He went towards Archambaut with his hand stretched out to give him

the water first of all. The singing was therefore left to Guillaume and the host, but this did not prevent Guillaume from glueing his eyes all the time to the little hole.

The priest was sprinkling the holy water, and directing it as well as he could at the head of Flamenca, who, to receive it better, uncovered her hair just at the parting. Her skin was white, and silken smooth, and her hair shone like gold, and just at that moment the sun was kind, and touched it with one of his rays.

At that small, first sight of all the rich treasure which Love had in keeping for him, Guillaume trembled with joy, and began to sing the "Signum Salutis."

Everyone approved of his singing, for his voice was clear and he sang well and easily. If they had known that he was a knight they would have been even more taken with it.

The priest came back to the altar and in a low voice said the "Confiteor" with Nicholas his clerk, who was about fourteen years old. In the choir there were only the two boys and Guillaume and the host who knew how to sing and took any part at all. Guillaume did his part perfectly, but he never forgot to keep his eyes to his little hole.

When the priest went to the Gospels the lady rose from her knees, but Guillaume was caused great distress by a man of the town who stood up too (in front of her), but God ordained that he should move away, and then Guillaume could watch and see his lady standing there. She crossed herself with her hand, her head a little bent, and one hand holding together the fastening of her cloak. Guillaume would have liked the Gospel to go on for ever,—provided, of course, that it would not have incommoded Fla-

menca. But alas! it was as short as a New Year's Day Gospel.

When it was finished she crossed herself, and Guillaume saw the marvel of her uncovered hand. The sight so ravished and pierced his heart with a sweet emotion that he almost fell. He was like a man bathing when the cold water rises to his chest, and he feels the sudden chill at his heart, and can only cry out "O! O!" and not another word. Guillaume was just like that.

He was fortunate enough to find a poor-box handy on which he could kneel down as if he were praying. No one noticed that there was anything wrong with him, because he had his hood on; but when it came to the Gospel and he did not uncover, it was quite clear that there was something the matter with his head, for he knelt there on his stool, without moving, right up to the very moment when Nicholas brought the Peace to him, and to the host who was beside him.

The lad was using a breviary which had in it psalms, hymns, gospels, prayers, responses, verses, and lessons. With this book he gave the Peace to Flamenca, and when she kissed it, Guillaume, peering through the hole—(so little a hole that his little finger would have filled it)—Guillaume could see her sweet, ripe mouth. Ah! then indeed Love bade him take courage, for had he not already reached a happy haven? For a year he had hardly hoped to get so much as a sight of his dear, and now what he had just seen had ravished his eyes and filled his heart with sweetness.

When Nicholas had finished, Guillaume began to consider how he could get hold of the book, and he thought of this excuse:

"Friend," said he to the clerk, "have you got a

table there and a calendar. I want to find out on what date Whitsunday falls."

"Yes, certainly, Sire," said the boy, and handed him over the book.

But Guillaume did not want anyone to explain to him how to reckon the day of the month or the epact; he turned the leaves over one by one, and he would have liked to kiss them all for the sake of one, if he could have done it without the host seeing as he sat beside him. He bethought him of a neat device; said he, " I must first instruct someone else in order that I may learn myself." Then, "See here, clerk, where do you give the Peace? You ought to do it with the psalter."

"Sire, that is how I do it," and he showed Guillaume the place.

Guillaume did not ask any more questions; he began to pray and to kiss the page a thousand thousand times; he felt as though he had been given the riches of the whole world; he thought that there was nothing which he now lacked. His happiness would have been perfect and complete if only his two eyes could have contrived, the one to look through the hole, and the other on the book. He remained so long in a dream that he only came out of it when the priest was saying, "Ite Missa est," and you can imagine how it hurt him to hear those words.

Archambaut went out at once, caring nothing if he were properly attended or not. Flamenca had no time either to rest a moment or to pray, nor her maidens either, and these were pretty girls too and of an age to be married, for the younger of them had passed her fifteenth birthday.

So away they went. But Guillaume stayed behind and heard sexts, which the priest was beginning.

When it was over he went to the priest and greeted him graciously.

"Sire," said he, "I am going to ask you to do me a favour as a welcome to me. Will you come and dine at the inn to-day, and in the future, for as long as I stay here, will you be a guest at my table?"

"Say 'yes,' Sire," said the host, "it will be worth your while."

The priest was no fool; he enjoyed the society of polite persons, and so he said "yes." Guillaume and he thanked each other, and started off to the inn, where they found dinner all ready.

When the table had been cleared Guillaume hardly spoke a word, for his mind was preoccupied. He got up at last, and went away to his room to rest and to look at the tower in greater comfort, and when he had looked at it long enough he lay down on his bed and went to sleep, and in his sleep lived over again all that he had seen and felt that day.

It was late when he woke up.

The host sent to look for the priest and Nicholas. Dom Justin—that was the priest's name—was a very upright man. "Fair Sire," said Guillaume to him when he came, in the friendliest way, "in the future do not wait to be fetched at meal-times. You are invited once for all."

"Sire, I will do as you desire."

Now it was the custom of the country that at Easter-time, after supper, people would begin to dance, and to enjoy themselves in all those ways that are fitting in the spring. That very night they were planting and setting the may-boughs, and that was another cause for jollity. Guillaume and the host went out into a garden, and from there they heard the singing all about the town, and the little birds too, piping and fluting among the leaves. It would have

needed a lover with a very tough heart not to feel his wounds opened by all that melody.

At nightfall, everyone went home. "Sire," said the host, "it is time to go in, for the dew will not be at all good for you."

Guillaume was sorry to go in, and when he was in his bed, and his esquires in theirs, he had many a struggle with himself. "Love, Love," he cried, "come quick to help me, for if you do not it will soon be too late. My heart is gone away from me to that tower, and if you do not soon set my body there too, I am lost. No one can live without a heart, so I tell you this solemnly: if you will not regard me, you can set about finding another lover, for I shall be gone.—And whither?—How can I tell? Where everyone goes, into the other world, to find out if you have as much power there as you have here. And do not go for to think that I shall come back to you again, for any comfort that you might give me. Rather I think that our acquaintance began in an evil hour.

"And what are you doing, Lady Mercy? Generally you arrive in the nick of time. Don't you see how Love has smitten me with his arrow and set my heart on fire? Sure the barb was poisoned! And I am wounded in two places, for the shaft that so torments me has struck me through both ears and eyes.

"Was there ever an archer so crafty as Love, or one that hits so surely? Wherever his arrow lights it strikes through to the heart itself, and there stays. And yet the place where the wound is, looks perfectly unharmed, and no one would think that an arrow had struck there. So the stricken one thinks that he is in good health until he begins to lose his strength, and all desire to eat, drink or sleep. Nothing can cure that wound, unless Love, for pity of him, strikes again, making another wound as deep as his, and with that

self-same arrow; and then it is right and natural that the two wounded creatures should heal each other if they may. Indeed a lover's heart is such that it cannot be perfectly healed except by the wounding of another heart.

"So how can I ever be healed, when she that I love has never even seen me, and when she does not know who I am, or what I am doing here? How can Love pierce her with that same arrow that I have in my heart unless first she should hear me speak, speak to me, see me, touch me? Then Love would have four ways of attack, and he could wound her to cure me. Surely if she could see me dying of anguish at her feet she would have some pity on me. And yet, if you are to believe some who have experienced it, there are women so cruel as to show no mercy, and to refuse what they have themselves promised. One of these lets a man court and woo her for two or three years, and then when he thinks that he has won her, he finds that he is further from his love than ever he was, and that he must ask pardon for ever having dared to hope that he might some day have her permission to love her.

"Since then these wretches suffer so, being fed upon falseness for vi years, or vii, or viii, or ix, why do I wait, and not get me away at once before Love wounds me again. It would be no more than sense and prudence if I should try to set myself free from this tyranny.

"But it is too late to think of that now. I ought to have considered it before ever I came here; for now that I am so far gone that I cannot defend myself against Love, the only thing to do is to wait upon him, and bear it as well as I can. By perseverance I shall prevail, and it is a faint heart that easily despairs. To-morrow is the first of May, and to-

morrow, if Love likes, he can bestow on me as great a bounty as he did yesterday, for it is a high feast, the feast of two apostles—and two apostles ought really to have a knight along with them. And for me tomorrow will be a feast if I see the creature whom in all the world I most desire, to whom I give myself, and whose I am."

And so, on that word, he fell asleep, and hardly were his eyes shut when Love brought him a great delight, for as he slept, Love showed him his lady.

Down he went on his knees before her, and besought her, thus:

"If it please you, lady, have pity, have pity on me. Your true and high renown that lightens and shines through all the world, your nobility, your rarity and worth, your beauty, your wit, courtesy, and the sweetness of your company—all these have brought me to you, to be yours if you will have me. And if you will grant me so much that you will deign to take me for your own, then I want no more, for I have all that I desire if I am only yours.

"Do not take it ill, I beseech you, that I show you all my heart so suddenly, for the love that is there compels me to beg you now—now—for mercy. But if I could speak to you, or if only I could see you often, then I should say none of all this, for I should be content with the sweetness of your presence. But now I must make the most of this one chance of supplicating you, for I do not know when I shall see you again except in my heart, and therefore I must speak boldly, taking courage from fear, because of the discretion I know that is in you, and telling you all my heart."

When Guillaume had made a long enough prayer, she answered him.

"Sire," she said, "who are you, you who beseech

me with such courtesy? Do not be angry that I ask this, for no man yet has spoken so to me; no man has ever yet so talked to me of love."

"Lady, I am your man. I am your slave. My name is Guillaume of Nevers, and I have come thus to you to beg on my knees for mercy, to beg you to tell me of some way in which I may speak with you, be it only a word. And if you give me no counsel I am a dead man."

"Fair Sire," Flamenca answered, "you yourself must know how little I can counsel you. Supposing even I were willing to love you, you could have no joy of me, nor could I ever be happy in you. If you love me, and I, being able but not willing, should grant you no joy, then that would be pride in me. But if I am willing, but have not the power, then I should have no blame for that. You can see for yourself how much power I have, whatever my will may be, therefore I beg you not to love me, for it is profitless. For Love cannot come at me, and it is the greatest grace that God has permitted me in this prison, that Love cannot move me."

"Ah! sweet thing, what shall I do if I cannot have good counsel from you whom I love and long for and desire, and in comparison with whom the whole world is of no more worth than an old glove? For any other to counsel me I shall have need of a diviner, for I shall not tell my heart to any creature in the world but only to you, my sweet thing, you who have so taken and bound me that you are all my desire, and my joy, and my thought. If you refuse to take me now for your man I shall care little for my life, for I know that my heart is so fond that it will never wish to live unless it may draw its life from you."

"Sire, you speak humbly and with courtesy, and I

see well that, as you say, you have it in your heart to do me honour. If I could give you good counsel I would do it gladly, for I have not the heart of a beast, nor am I made of iron or of steel," said she. "I do not wish that such a knight as you should die for me, if I can save him. Besides, such courteous asking ought indeed to melt and soften any gentle heart that hears it, for the sweet persuasion of prayer would supple cold iron if it would but listen, and that woman is an ill creature, and that object unyielding indeed, which is not softened by this sweet persuasion. That heart is hard and frozen and altogether self-regarding that does not melt when it is touched by the sweet persuasion of prayer, for this sweet persuasion is gentle and warm and pitiful, and wherever it comes, if it perseveres any time at all, and if it is pure and sincere, then it may as it will, destroy or exalt. Sweet persuasion of prayer constrains God and the Saints, and calms the sea and the winds, and since prayer is so mighty, I think it no shame to be overcome by it, especially when the prayer is spoken by one in whom pleasure and worth and discretion are found, and who makes all good things better yet.

"So I will counsel you at once as you ask me:—

"Fair Sire, he who gives me the Peace at church, I believe that he, if he knew how, could speak one word to me at a time; but I know that there is no space for more, and the next time he must take care to be silent so that I may answer him. Now I have told you how to speak.

"Next, in Peire Gui's baths, whither I go at times to bathe, a man might well make an opening, underground and secret, by which my dear might come to me in the baths when he knew that I was there. Now I have showed you the way.

"But in what I have told you let no other meddle nor have a finger in it, for with all my heart I give myself to you, and for your sake I yield myself to Love.

"And now, so that you may certainly believe me, be you thus with my arms about you. And now I have kissed you, my dear dear. You are so valiant, and so noble, and so courteous that any woman anywhere ought to honour and entertain you, and obey in all you wish."

So then she kissed him, and took him in her arms, and gave him every joy there is of look and word and caress.

As soon as Guillaume had received this counsel of his lady in a dream, then quick, Love woke him up with joy, and said:

"Guillaume, what are you thinking about! Are you going to do anything else to-day but dream?"

Guillaume sighed and answered:

"I was quite content with that alone, and, Love, you did very wrong when you woke me up so soon, for then you took away all the great grace you had done me while I slept. For God's sake let me sleep again, if you please, just a little more. Yet no! I have slept enough, for it will be full daylight before I have remembered all my dream."

So he began to go through it again, and laughing he vowed to himself never to eat pears again till that dream came true, "and," said he, "if God wills, she shall some day hear the counsel which she has given me."

The night passed, and the early morning, until the sun shone, all ruddy, into his room. Then Guillaume got up, sleepy still, but his head was not so full of cobwebs that he forgot to open the window before he began to dress. If anyone had seen him they

would have known that he was a lover, for he was pale and there were blue shadows round his eyes, and his pulse was fevered, and he had even grown a little thinner. No one who has been wounded by Love will wonder at this, for a man does not recover from love as from a natural disease. The pain of love is so sharp that an attack will bring you lower in one day or one night than another sickness might in xviii days. I will tell you why. It is because Love is a hurt which attacks the heart, and takes captive the soul and binds it fast, so that a man gets no peace; whether he thinks of this or that his thoughts always go back to one place, and always his torment is the same, and there is never an hour but he feels it. But other diseases give some intervals of repose, either soon or late. Nature then, who is mistress of the heart, strives amain to heal it, but she knows she is vanquished by Love, and that there is no help nor heal that she can bring. So she gives up this heart for lost, and says to the soul:

"You, dame, know better than I, so, if you will, seek medicine for your hurt, but not in herbs nor soothing gums, nor in anything which is in my power, because these are no use for your wound." For love is a wound in the soul, and so delightful to the wounded that they have no wish to be cured, and therefore Nature gives them up.

Therefore, when a man has been wounded deep with Love, reason is that he should lose his colour, and become feeble and weak, though perfectly healthy otherwise, for spirit dwells so close to body that if it suffer any ill it needs must feel it and pass it on to the body. If the body did not suffer the pain, then love would be a good thing and not an evil, but since the body has such pain from it men hold it an evil, and this is true enough, for it is a terrible burning disease,

not to be helped by any manner of ointments. If there had been any cure for it Phœbus would have known of it, for he was a marvellous wise mage, and the greatest that ever was, and yet he said that in love's sickness none of the arts were any use at all to their master. Thus he confessed that he had not found any medicine that had any power over love; so I do not wonder that Guillaume was worn out with it.

As soon as he had washed his hands the host came to him and made a reverence, and said:

"The Lord of Paradise save and guard you, Sire."

"Host, God give you a share in that blessing. Have they rung the bell yet? Or shall we go out and enjoy the air as we did yesterday?"

"Sire, that is as you please, but I would like you to drink, if you will, a little absinthe, for just now, in May-time, it ought to be drunk."

"Host, I will indeed. Bring it here."

"Sire, here it is. Look how clear it is and good."

Guillaume then had his cup got out, such a cup that an emperor might well have drunk out of it, so beautiful it was, and large, and cunningly adorned with enamellers' work all over. It weighed fifteen marks of silver, and the work was worth much more.

Guillaume drank out of it and then gave it to the host. "I have drunk enough," said he, "for to-day; and I should much rather that the cup was yours than mine."

The host could not think of a thing to say, but for pleasure he began to laugh, and he could hardly believe his luck. But Guillaume so persuaded him that he took the cup, and he swore that as long as it lasted he would never drink out of any other, nor sell it, nor change it for a better, or a bigger, or a smaller. He gave it to his wife to keep, and she took it carefully, and put it into her coffer.

While the esquires were busy with dinner Guillaume and the host went to church to say their prayers; but though their prayers went to the same Father they were not by any means brothers; not they; they were nothing alike except in the bare name. Guillaume took very good care to stand in the same place as he had the day before, and he hardly waited to bow to the priest before twisting round so as to be able to see his dear when she came in.

Tierce was rung, and the bell was still, and then in came Sire Archambaut—dear lord! what a savage ugly fellow to lead in such a lady.

Guillaume peered through the hole like a fowler watching a partridge, and he took little notice of what they were singing; but for all his staring and peering, he made no mistakes in the psalms. By good luck he had his reward. Flamenca stopped close to the door of the choir to pray, and she stayed longer than usual. And more—she took off her glove; he saw her right hand bare. She bent her head so as to spit, and he had the bliss of all her mouth. Her mouth! his eyes kissed it and caressed it, and drew her closer and closer to the little hole. It was a moment of most exquisite delight.

And just then the sun slanted down a ray to the place where this other sun knelt before God in prayer. Yet, if it had not been for the obscuring cloud of that wretched veil, her face itself was bright enough with beauty's shining to have lit the dark recess in which she knelt.

Guillaume watched her; his breviary was open before him, but his eyes and his soul were at the hole, while his lips were repeating the words. Ah! how he wished that the Mass had been made up of nothing but Gospels and Agnus's, for then Flamenca stood up. And again, he would have given a great deal to consign to some other place the screen that hid her,

and the veil too; and no loss if that place had been a hot one.

When it came to the time for Nicholas to give the Peace, Guillaume wanted to tell him exactly at which of the psalms he should give it, so that he himself should know the place afterwards. So he said:

"Friend," said he, "I will show you where you ought to give the Peace, when you go to do it. I can teach you a lot of things. You should always give it here—'Fiat pax in virtute,' and do not alter the place unless I tell you to. For when David had finished making the whole psalter, he told Solomon that every day he ought to kiss these words; and all the time Solomon was king, his kingdom was at peace."

Said Nicholas, "I understand, Sire, and I will always do as you tell me."

Said Guillaume, "Friend, whatever you do, bring back the book afterwards."

"Oh! there are many things that I would like you to teach me if you will."

After Nicholas had given the Peace on the page which Guillaume had showed him he brought the book back to Guillaume, who was waiting at his little hole. When Guillaume held the book in his hand his heart was wholly refreshed with joy; he covered his face with his hood and pressed the book to forehead, eyes, mouth and cheeks; and then peeped through the little hole to see if she, for whose sake he was behaving like this, was perhaps watching him. Often it is so, a lover wishes that the desire of another heart should be as his own desire, and his grief the other's grief. If there were any equity in Love, each heart would be alike, but all the equity that Love knows is to ignore both justice and proportion.

Now Guillaume had taken care to notice that a man would have time to slip in a word when Nicholas

gave the Peace to be kissed by Flamenca—just at the moment when she bent to kiss it with her lovely mouth, and just before he took back the book. Then, so far as Guillaume could see, there would be time to say one word.

When Mass was over away went Archambaut, before anyone else, with his head in the air; and after him went Flamenca, without any music of jongleurs, or any other following, except the maids that she always had to go with her and serve her and dress and undress her; that is, Alis and Margarida.

When the folk were all gone out, Guillaume heard the prayers, and then he went up to Nicholas and whispered softly in his ear:

"Come along for dinner in good time when it is ready."

"Certainly, Sire," answered Nicholas.

Guillaume shut his book and laid it on a table and went out of church, and the host was pleased to go along with him. The country girls had taken up all the may-boughs that they had set last night, and they were singing their ballads now. They went by just in front of Guillaume singing a May-rhyme; this was it:

"God bless the woman who seeks her dear
And brings him home from the woods to-day,
The better to yield him all her joy,
These joyful Kalends of the May.

And if there come to that bedside
Her jealous husband, let her say,
'My lover in my arms is lying
These joyful Kalends of the May.

'My lover in my arms is lying,
Begone! Have done with all your prying!
Away!'—And he shall go away,
These joyful Kalends of the May."

Guillaume sighed from his very heart, and prayed to God most humbly to bring to pass, for him, this verse which the girls were singing.

When they had come to the inn the host said, "Sire, would you like to see the baths which I have all ready for you to take?"

Said Guillaume, "I do not wish to bathe to-day, for it is too soon after the Kalends; I had better wait. The moon will be in its ninth day to-morrow, and that will be a favourable time to take the baths."

"Sire, just as you please," replied the host pleasantly.

Just then in came Father Justin, and Guillaume made him very welcome, embracing him with much courtesy. Said he:

"Sire, if you please, I should like to speak with you alone," and then to one of his esquires, "Open the door. Do not sit down. And take care that you do not put on me either cloak or fur, especially when it is fine, unless I myself tell you to."

The priest was very pleased by Guillaume's pleasant way of speaking.

. . . . . .

Said Guillaume:

"Fair Sire priest, even if I am not in good health I thank God that I am a rich man. I wish you to have something really good; it is a white gown, quite fresh and new, furred with black squirrel. And Nicholas—he is a good honest lad—he shall have another of white lambskin that one of my esquires made. Go and fetch it, so that he can take it away with him."

"Thanks, thanks," said the priest, "but do you think, Sire, that I shall take your gown from you like this? It would be nothing short of robbery if I took it without having done anything to serve you."

"Sire, if you please, do take it. And do not think of doing me a service, for you have already done enough," said Guillaume, and persuaded him so strongly that the priest could not refuse, and at last took the gown.

When they had dined Guillaume went into his bedroom, and there lay down to rest. To rest? Yes, if you can call it resting when a man trembles and sweats with anguish, starts and shakes, yawns and sobs, laments, sighs, weeps and faints away,—then Guillaume rested in his room till nightfall.

Then he went out according to his custom to hear the nightingale in the little wood, but that did not help his sickness in the least; on the contrary it made it worse. But Love's pain pleases more the greater it grows, and it makes a man suffer a worse evil for sake of a lesser, so that he cannot be rid of it; just as in a game a man ruins himself who, in order to lose less, throws away more.

When the host was ready they came in again and supped in Dom Justin's honour. Then Guillaume went to bed, but he did not find much ease there, so he got up and went to the window, and, said he:

"Alas! against Love how little wealth avails, or craft, or strength, or wisdom, valiance or chivalry, breeding or courtesy, beauty or sense or birth, parents or friends or a man's own prowess. Even Love is powerless against love, and that makes me dread the more, for if Love availed against love, then Love might help me against love, because I love more than any other creature. But love is the pain that a man suffers, and Love is he that causes the pain, and the one can do nothing to cure the other because this is the author of that. Chance goes for more in it than right, for such is Love's foolish fashion that he does

not come where he ought nor help where he could. For she whom I love will love another, and he will be wooing someone else; and so I shall not have her, nor she him, nor he that other one. This is Love's discord, and yet, in this discord is harmony, for we are all in the like case, and so discord turns to harmony. So, after all, Love, the ruler and justiciar of the world, deals out true justice, since if I love unloved, I am avenged of my lady when she is enamoured of another who does not care two straws for her.

"But as yet," said Guillaume, "I cannot accuse her of turning from me to another, for I cannot come to speak with her, and I have neither maid nor man who could carry to her my heart's love. I cannot even send a message in a letter, for there is no warden in this tower whom I can bribe, because Archambaut is warden, lord, and porter too. But if I cannot think of some way for myself, I shall find no one who will do it for me. I will do according to the dream which I was dreaming this morning when I woke up and could sleep no more. I will arrange with Dom Justin, and I will become his clerk. As for Nicholas I will pack him off to Paris—he's a good lad—to study for two years there. The host I will persuade to move out of this house and leave it all to me; then I will send to my stewards to let me have four masons, good stone-cutters, with their picks and hammers. They shall come to the inn at night, and work by candle-light, and make me a right road between my room and the baths, with the ends well sealed and closed. They shall swear to me upon the Saints that they will tell no one of it, and when they have done it they shall go away.

"Then I will pretend to be better, and to wish to enjoy myself a little, so I will bring my host back and he will never know why I drove him out of his own

house, except so that I might be more at my ease, and to rest better.

"To Dame Bellepile, that good, intelligent woman, who has nothing now to weave or sew or spin, I will give cloth of bordered purple sown with golden stars. It will be a treasure for her for a long time when she has made it up into a fine handsome gown with some vair fur that I will give her, good and fresh and unused.

"But if Love wills that nothing is to come of all this that I have now in mind, only let him show me some sign!"

At this word he lay down on his bed, and gathered up the clothes, and flung them this way and that, as Love fiercely assailed and pricked him with many sharp desires. Guillaume thought then that Love spoke to him, reproaching him with a look of anger and menace, saying:

"You who willingly put two walls between you and your heart's love—that is no lover's way!"

Guillaume ran to the window and looked at the tower up and down, as though someone had called him by name. He behaved with all the restlessness of a lover, for now he lay down and now got up, and at last, when sleep was growing too strong for him he cried:

"Love, Love, when I sleep let me dream as I have dreamed before. Show me, if only in a vision, her whom waking I cannot see. It is of you, my lady, that I speak, and if I can fall asleep in the thought of you, then it will bring me good fortune. So now I shall cry, so long as I am awake, 'You, you, you, lady, you,' I shall cry. And when my eyes close, my heart shall waken with you, with you lady, yea, with you!"

He had not time to say knife before he was asleep, and then he saw his lady at his will, with no hin-

drance between them at all. It generally happens thus, that a man can dream according to his desire, if he goes to sleep in the thought of it; it often was so with Guillaume.

He did not wake till daylight, but then he got up early to hear Mass, for he knew that it would be said early because it was a feast day.

After Mass he went to the baths and did not come out till close on Tierce, and he searched all the baths well for a place where he might make his tunnel as he had planned. The stone of the baths was such soft tufa that you could write your name on it with a knife, and never need a hammer. There was in one place a very dark corner, and this was right opposite the wall of the room where Guillaume lay; here he thought was the place for him.

He came out from the baths weak and tired, and to him came the priest, and Peire Gui the host, and Nicholas; the hostess came to his room too and greeted him; then they all ate together in accord, the four of them, and Guillaume the fifth.

After eating Guillaume sent to fetch the purple stuff that he wished to offer to the hostess. One of the esquires went quickly and got it out of the trunk, a lovely cloth; there never was better in Thebes nor Thessaly. Then Guillaume gave it to the hostess.

"Dame," said he, "I would like you to make a summer mantle and a gown to suit you out of this cloth. And if God wills that I should be delivered out of the inward pain I feel, you shall have another like it every year."

Then he gave her good vair fur which the provost of Arras had given him, and which had been fashioned at Cambrai—it was worth four marks and more. He also made her a pretty honeyed compliment, for, said he, "I do not want you to take this as

a gift, but as an earnest only, so that you may know I have more yet to give."

"Lord," said she, "God save me, but this earnest is as good as any gift. And I pray God to give me the power, and my husband here too, to serve you in any way that you should need. Each of us longs to do so; so ask and have, fair dear lord, whatever you wish.

. . . . . .

"If we trouble you with noise and stir we have other houses and plenty of good lodging down in the town, and if you like we will move into them, and when you like, we will come back."

"Dame," said Guillaume, "I thank you. That is well said, and it's clear that you know just what a sick man wants. I would be glad of this, if it would not put my host out. But I would rather suffer any inconvenience than put him out at all."

"If, lord," the host replied, "if you could make a mistake, you would have made one now. You must never dream that anything could displease me that might give you pleasure. We will move there at once willingly, and so that God may quickly give you health, I will have our folk go there to-morrow to settle the rooms and sweep upstairs and down, and the day after, I promise you, we shall be away from here."

"Host, as you please. If God wills, it shall be only for a little while, for soon I shall be better and through my bad time, and then you shall come back. But the fact is that now for shame I cannot cry out at the pain that I suffer, and often I had much rather stay alone here by the fire, but I cannot do that if there are other people here.

"And now I am going to ask Dom Justin to cut my hair and make me a great tonsure. I used to have one once upon a time, and I see that I have committed a sin in letting my hair grow on top of my

head. I was once a Canon of Péronne, and I am determined to return there again, and so I must have a fine big tonsure. Thank God, I know the Office, and I will go through it every day with Dom Justin so that I shall know it better still. I am not too old yet to learn."

The priest could hardly answer because of his regret at having to cut off those curls, that were brighter than the bright gold leaf they beat at Montpellier, and that is the brightest gold there is.

Peire Gui himself could not help crying; his wife was on her knees and in a sad taking to judge by the tears that ran fast down her face. Nicholas was holding the basin, in fact all did everything they could to assist. The two esquires fled away each by himself and wept bitterly in solitude.

With a sharp but not very large pair of scissors the priest shore off the hair, and shaved Guillaume's neck, and made a fine large tonsure on top.

You must not think, though, that Dame Bellepile burnt those curls. Certainly not. She wrapped them in a piece of fair white cendal, and afterwards made them into a beautiful tassel for the cords of a mantle, and later on gave them, a precious gift, to Flamenca. So those curls were to be kissed a thousand times before they were done with.

When the priest had finished, Guillaume offered him a fine cup, without any foot, worth more than four marks, saying, very polite and courteous:

"Sire, take this as your payment—for a man ought to pay his barber."

The priest said that he could not take it.

"Take it. Truly, take it," Guillaume said, "for you will lose my friendship if you do not take it."

"Sire," then answered the priest, "I do not want to lose that, so I will take it as you wish."

The host and hostess then left the room, much afflicted at the visible suffering of their guest. They had never had such a guest before, or one so generous, for in iii days he had given them gifts to the value of more than xxx marks.

The priest stayed with him, and Nicholas, and the two esquires. Guillaume had called these two back to him, and made them stop crying, for, said he:

" Will you go on crying? Then it is clear that you do not wish my welfare."

Then the priest conjured Guillaume solemnly, saying:

"Sire, as you hope for good fortune, and for the sight of that thing which you most love, tell me what I can do to pleasure you. There is nothing I will not do, and gladly; you have only to command me, for, Sire, there is no reason nor sense nor need for you to have given to me as you have given. But you must understand this, that I am at your service to do anything at all for you."

"Sire," answered Guillaume, "I thank you. Do this then for me—take me for your clerk. And I advise you to send Nicholas (whom I like very well, for he is a pleasant lad) to Paris to study. His mind is now fresh and young, and in two years he will learn more there than he would here in three. I will give him four gold marks, and I will buy his clothes each year. Don't think that I am telling lies; look, here is the gold, and for his clothes here are xii marks of silver; he will be able to make a good show on that."

The priest was so overcome with delight that at first he could say no more than "Gracious Heaven!" But when he had a little recovered himself he said:

"Fair and generous lord, may the day we met together be blessed above all others. Nothing has so troubled me as to see my nephew wasting this, which

is the best time for study. So I resign him to you, I give him over to you to be your servant for ever. He knows now how to write letters and verses, and when he has been studying for two years he will know twice as much. As for what you ask me, you are my lord, and my lord you shall be, and I will do whatever you wish."

"Do not speak to me like that," answered Guillaume, "for I want you to promise that you will treat me just like your young clerk. Otherwise it will be no use, for, in all humility, I wish to serve God and you together. So long as I can hear my Office, do not think of doing me any other service. If you treat me with more consideration than any other server, that consideration will be harmful to me, and trouble, fair Sire, to you.

"But now have a gown made for me, a wide gown, big, round, and full, a gown of black say, or russet, or hodden grey, which shall cover me from head to foot.

"No more will I follow the gay go up and gay go down of courts, for everything there is vanity, and empty delight, so that the man who thinks he possesses most, when it comes to eventide he finds that he has little indeed."

(But that was how Isengrin preached, but if the priest had been a diviner he could have said, as Renard did, "Belin had better keep a good look-out!")

When they went into the town to get the gown made, the esquires said to each other, "If my lord come through this alive he will be a holy man. No more courts for him! If only he had on the right clothes he would look like some new monk of the Chartreuse or Citeaux."

Guillaume was alone at last. He had accomplished a great part of what he wanted, and now sleep, and

the good wine which the host had given him, invited him to rest a little after the baths.

So now how speedily Love had helped Guillaume on his way! Well might he exult over this fellow whom he had made a clerk, but soon (since Guillaume already knew his Office very well when he was tonsured),* with a "columus," and "secundum apostolorum" Love would rescue him from his misery for ever. But if one might complain of anything that great Love has done, surely one might hold it too great an orgulousness in him to make a man so act a part. But Love has no lord, and no equal neither, and so he does what he chooses, and makes a man take to what shifts he will.

On Thursday the host removed, and on that same day Guillaume sent to Castillon to fetch the workmen. A poor fellow took the message; he did not know who Guillaume was, and could not say who had sent him. [*But he told the masons that they were wanted to make a passage and*] to cut through rock and stone, and that they would be paid lavishly, so that everyone would be well pleased. In order that they should trust him, Guillaume gave them, before ever they came to work, x marks of silver which he had brought as their wages for a month.

On Saturday Nicholas went away, very pleased, for his pockets were well stuffed with gold and silver, He had a chance now to learn, if he wasn't a fool.

Guillaume came to vespers, shaven and shorn, and in his gown; at first this was always a bit hitched up on one side because he kept resting his hand on his hip in his usual way. But he was so well brought up, and so practised a server, that it was a pleasure to watch him; in church he never sat down, but listened

* This is admitted by Meyer to be obscure and probably corrupt.

all the time to the priest's words so as to be ready for his own part. Indeed, the priest thought that the Holy Ghost must speak through his lips, and that God's grace must be on him, for he had never seen a young man of such deep humility. He seemed to be an angel who had come down to earth bringing salvation. The more the priest watched him, the more beautiful he found his simplicity and piety; Dom Justin was quite overwhelmed by such a gift from God of a clerk who gave him clothes and food and everything he could wish for, and served in church as eagerly as if he were a penitent.

After vespers Guillaume went through the lessons and sang the proper responses for matins. He did not need to have his backbone rubbed nor his hands pinched, for he knew more about his business than the priest himself. When they had sung it through they went back to the inn and had supper till daylight, and then the priest went back.

When they came to the church—

"Sire," Guillaume asked with great simplicity, "shall I sleep here?"

"Dear friend, no," said the priest. "I will ring the matins bell for you, and you can come at the first ringing, if you are not so sound asleep that you do not hear it. But at the third ringing will be soon enough."

"But, fair dear Sire, who will wait on you, and who will take off your shoes?"

"Dear friend, I have a servant who does these things. You shall not serve me except when you help in church. You must not think of doing more, for this will be quite enough."

So Guillaume went off alone through the town, caring nothing for dirt nor dust, nor abashed at all at being seen—though there were plenty of strangers who had come to take the baths, out of France and

Burgundy, Flanders, Champagne, Normandy, and Brittany.

Guillaume did not sleep that night. At the first stroke of the bell he got up, and called one of his esquires, who locked the door of the room and the gate after him. Love went with him, Love led him by the hand, Love directed all his concerns, it was Love who had had him shaven, Love who had made him alter his clothes. Ah! Love! Love! what might is this! And who would have dreamt that Guillaume would ever be tonsured in order to woo. When other lovers adorn themselves, and dress themselves, and prink themselves, and think of nothing but gay apparellings, and horses, and robes, Brother Guillaume joined the Patarins, and served God for the sake of his lady.

What a fool he is, that jealous man who puts himself out to keep his wife safe, for if force cannot get her, craft will, so that, so far as I can see, he might just as well not have troubled at all.

People took no more notice of Guillaume than of a hermit. He went briskly to church, and when he had crossed himself he took the bell-rope from Dom Justin's hand. He had never rung a bell before, but that did not worry him; he rang the matins bell ding-dong, and when he pulled the big tenor bell he did it so lustily that the bell-tower itself was startled.

After matins Dom Justin told Guillaume to sleep a little, and took him to a nice little room close to the tower, where Nicholas generally slept. But Guillaume had not much desire to sleep, for he had thought of a new difficulty; he had to think what he would say to his lady when he gave her the Peace.

"Love," he cried, "what shall I do? Where are you? What shall I say if you will not come to me and counsel me? Little you care for all my troubles!

Is it deaf you are, or asleep, or witless, or dumb? Or so orgulous that you care nothing any more for me or any other? Or would you do as God did when he sent out his apostles saying, 'My men, when you stand before kings do not consider what you should say, for it shall surely be made plain to you when you have need of it'?

"Yet the apostles' fear before the emperor was nothing to my fear of failing when I stand before her whom so much I desire. Nevertheless, I will make proof of your counsel, and I shall know if you have led me truly if I can think of some right word in my extremity. What I now need is some happy phrase, clear and short and easily to be understood by her who has set my heart on fire; but I have no idea what I ought to say, and the more I think, the further I am from finding it. But I am a fool to stay in bed so long!"

So he got up and came out of his little room and put the key up on the ledge, because he had seen Dom Justin take it from there, and so he put it back where it ought to go. He told the servant, whose name was Vidal, to bring water and salt to make the holy water, and when he had taken some of it to wash his hands the priest was awake. Guillaume gave him water to wash his hands, and then they began Prime. When they had sung Tierce, Guillaume rang the Mass bell lustily, and everyone came in as usual to Mass.

First of all the great crowd came, and after, last of all, Archambaut; if he could have had his choice there would not have been any Sundays or holidays. His head was like those shaggy heads of devils that the painters draw, and it was no wonder that Flamenca made no pretence of rejoicing in his love, for a lady has every right to be very much upset when the

devil appears to her. But she came following after him, and went into the recess.

You may believe me when I tell you that Guillaume saw her come, for he was not looking at anything else, and if anyone does not believe me in this, I shall not believe him, no, not even if he gives me his oath.

Guillaume knew his business as a clerk very well. He had the whole Office by heart, and the Offertory, and the Communion. There was no sermon that day, and no notices of holy days in the week. Guillaume's voice was clear and true, and he sang out well with the Agnus Dei.

And then he took the Peace, and gave it, as was right, first to the host who was in the choir, and he handed it on to the burgesses outside, and so it passed through the church. Guillaume went after it, to take his book again, but he dawdled so that Archambaut had had it before he came up to the place where his joy was hidden away. Not for all the world would Guillaume have kissed Archambaut or given him the Peace.

So Guillaume went forward; and God help him! for never in his life had he been so much at a loss, or thought so cheap of himself, as he did now.

He kept his head lowered and did not raise his eyes nor look to right or left, and so he came and stood before Flamenca. He was determined to speak to her, to say at least one word, but he cast all upon Love, saying in his heart, "If Love now gives me no light nor guidance towards my desire, I shall never trust him again. But yet, if God wills, all shall be well. Love does not fail when the pinch comes, though, in the strength and flame of my desire, it seems to me that he tarries too long." But every lover is alike in this.

So Guillaume stood before his lady, and when she kissed the psalter, he said very softly:

"Alas!" only he did not speak so low but that she heard it very well.

Then he went away, very humbly, with his head bent; and yet he thought that he had accomplished a mighty thing. If in a tourney he had unhorsed a hundred knights, and taken five hundred horses, he would not have rejoiced with such perfect joy, for nothing in the world so delights a true lover as that bliss which comes to him from her in whom his heart is set.

The priest did not wait, but after Mass he began his nones. Guillaume held the psalter and kept it open at the psalms, and before he put it down he had kissed the page more than a hundred times, remembering too that word, "Alas!"

Archambaut went off, leading his wife with him; he would not think of leaving her behind. Guillaume followed her with his heart for as long as he could see her. Then he folded and laid by the vestments, and put the chalice and paten away in a safe place, and at last went away with the host and the priest.

After dinner the host took himself off with Dom Justin, and Guillaume stayed in the house, and as soon as the servants had eaten he went to his bedroom. But small wonder if he fidgeted here and there, for it seemed to him that he had begun well that day, and if only his joy had lasted it would have been joy indeed, but soon he was unhappy again, for perfect joy waits as little time at a lover's door as at a gambler's, and all in a moment it is changed to sorrow. So then he said:

"Alas! why am I not dead? Love, you have been little aid to me. I thought I had thrown a vi, but it

is only an ace. For my lady cannot possibly have heard the word I said since I spoke it with a sigh because my heart all but failed me. And if my lady had heard me, when she raised her head she would have looked at me, at least one glance, and not turned so quickly away. It is her veil that has betrayed me by keeping her ears so covered. Devil take this business of veils! Hang him who first made a veil! Why could he not make them so fine that they should not cloud the sight nor muffle up the hearing! Alas! for me, poor wretch! What means shall I try now? What shall I do? Now, Love, I know what you are worth, you who care nothing for the hurt of another."

"You're wrong."

"How?"

"Truly!"

"Why?"

"Good God! Have I not let you speak with her to-day?"

"Yes, it is true that I have spoken with my lady, but what good is it to me, and how am I forwarder?"

"You have spoken to her. Just tell me now—when did you ever have such another bounty? And before she kissed the psalter and hid her face again, did you not see her sweet, smiling mouth?"

"All this is true, and I admit that I have been so close to my lady that we both held the same book; and if we had had an understanding together, and if the danger had been less, and if there had not been so many onlookers, then things would not have been so ill. But they say that Tantalus wept as he lay dying of hunger and thirst, set in water up to his chin, and with ripe apples close above him. Yet when he thought to drink, the water it fled away, and the fruit likewise, and so he suffered a heavy punishment

for having betrayed counsel. It is no less a pain, this that I suffer, for I have been as close to the siren who draws me by the very sweetness of her worth and nobleness. All this calls and draws me towards her, so that I am slain by hunger and by thirst and by desire of her. If I have been a fool, it is on my own head, and it is just that I should pay for it without asking the help of any other. I am content to bear the pain alone, so long as there are two of us to be healed, for there is no joy for me in my lady unless she rejoices in my joy. That is the sweetness of the pleasure of love, so that when each joys in each they taste the sweetness. For if I love and desire her as I do, and if I hold her in my arms, and kiss and embrace her and have all my will, yet, if I think that she is not truly yielded, or if I think that she is unwilling and suffers it I know not why, then I do not taste love's sweetness. I need that her delight should sweeten my own delight, so that each has joy in the other. Whoever knows not this knows nothing of pleasure, and whoever finds it hard to understand cannot have ever heard, I think, the proverb, 'to have such joy of it as a man who kisses his lady sleeping.'

"But I do not know why I should so despond, nor why I should wish to perish, for when there is a choice it is better to choose the happier way. And I do truly believe that my lady heard what I said, but I suffer now because a woman is a secret thing, and wills not to make any sign before she was well considered. She knows that I am a stranger, and very like she has said to herself, 'This clerk who says to me "Alas!"—I know what he means. If he did not wish to have something from me he would not speak to me in such a place. I must make sure what he means. It is because I am hedged about here and kept close in prison so that no one dare speak to me

that he has taken this way of speaking to me, and has so impertinently insulted me.'

"Ah! how little worth is my comfort. It is worth nothing at all, for ill-fortune always catches up a man before long. They say, 'Who loves much, fears much,' and for that very reason I, who love so deeply, fear as greatly. There is no true joy for me but in my lady, and she can fill me with joy by a single word. Alas! there is no escape from this careful heaviness, from this sorrow, desire, and bitterness."

And that is how all lovers are; they willingly bear a hundred crosses for one good thing.

So Guillaume fell asleep and into many dreams, now happy, now sad, now of delight, and now of pain.

Flamenca meanwhile, not so far away, left the church reflecting on the word which he had spoken, and a little troubled by it; but she took good care to hide her thoughts as long as her husband was with her.

When Archambaut had dined, he left the tower as he always did, and went into his house where the servants were. Flamenca remained, full of heavy thought. Bitterly she lamented her wretchedness, calling herself a sad unfortunate, while her heart's tears ran down her cheeks, so that anyone might have seen that she was more utterly wretched than she had ever been before.

Remembering that word of Guillaume's she cried:

"It is I that should say 'Alas!' But he says 'Alas!' to me, and he is neither forlorn, nor a sick man, nor a captive. He is comely and strong, but it is not courteous of him to make a mock of me. He has done wrong to hurt me so by caring nothing for the torments I suffer. He ought not to have mocked me so, for a word of mockery is worse than a hundred lies. Ah God! what is he saying? What does he want?

What is he asking for? Am I not wretched and unfortunate enough? Do I not live in misery? Fair Lord God, what have I done that he should assail me in such a place? For it was a strange place to choose for such an assault. And yet he took care to speak so low that no one else could hear, and before he went away I could see that he grew pale, and he sighed a little too, as though he were afraid, and then grew red and shamefaced. I do not know what to think of it. Does he desire me? Is he wooing me in this way? He had better seek another love, for my love is not love, but anguish and sorrow, a thing of weariness and pain. Tears and sighs and restlessness, wretchedness, distress and weeping, bitter sadness at my heart—all these are my companions and close friends by reason of my lord Sire Archambaut, who is my tyrant night and day, and why, I know not. Indeed he might take my life and welcome. I had better be a slave among the Armenians or the Greeks, in Corsica or Sardinia, to drag stones or logs of trees; I could not even be worse off if I had an unkind stepmother."

Alis heard what she said, but did not know the reason for her lady's great distress. Then Flamenca called Margarida:

"Come here, my dear child, and you too, Alis, and listen to my troubles. I would be glad to die, and my heart is so heavy that it is a wonder that I am not dead and cold.

"A certain fellow—I do not know who he is, I have never seen him before—has grievously insulted me."

"Lady, who is he?" says Margarida.

"My dear, the man who gave me the Peace. You were standing by me, and yet you did not hear what he said—did you now, on your honour?"

"Lady, if you please, tell us about it."

"My dear, you distress me to recall it, but I will tell you, whatever it costs me.

"For evil will, and for despite, and because he knows that I have no pleasure nor ease nor joy, but only sorrow and unresting heaviness, he said to me, 'Alas!' as though he were the wretched one and not I. He only said it so as to remind me that every day I have cause to lament my lot."

Then said Margarida:

"Sweet lady, on my honour, I do not think he spoke it with an evil will. He did not seem to me so ill-bred as to do such a villainy. He is not the same one who generally gives us the Peace. This one is handsomer and bigger, and he reads and sings better, and he has all the look of a gentleman. I think it is that your beauty has ravished away his heart, and because he cannot otherwise speak to you nor woo you, he has put himself in this great jeopardy so as to tell you of his plight."

And Alis said:

"As God helps me, you have it. That is it. But how did he look, my lady, when he came up to you?"

"Alis, he did not raise his eyes."

"Aha! then there was no pride in what he said, and no malice nor villainy, but a right fear."

"And, my dear, he sighed a little when he spoke to me, and went very red."

"You need not say any more. I understand. I do not know him nor who he is, but it would be a great courtesy to answer him."

"My dear, it is easy for you to talk; but we shall have to think of some word that will be in accord with that which he has spoken first, for I cannot answer well and fitly on the spur of the moment.

Also, a woman must conceal her heart, at least at first, so that her intention is not known, and I must say something so nicely balanced that it shall make him neither hope nor despair."

"Lady, you know better how to play this game than I do, but truly, if you will listen to me, you will say nothing which will not make his heart rejoice. God has surely given him to you to deliver you out of prison, and if you yourself cast away your happiness, who will pity you? And no one ought to pity you either!"

"My dear, when I know all his heart, which he will declare to me word by word—(in two months, if we live so long we will know all his intentions)—if then I understand that it is love indeed which constrains him, then I will be gracious to him and generous, and no longer conceal my love, but in everything my will shall be as his will. A woman very soon sees who loves her and who wishes to betray her, but if once she knows that she is loved without feigning, and still shuts up her heart against love, then she is a false traitor, and he is a fool who asks her for any favours.

"Love will not have a woman variable. She is no woman whose heart changes, or who will not listen to his teaching. What is she then? She is a traitress if she leaves her true lover, her constant wooer and servant, languishing in perpetual delays. The devil! It would be cruelty if at the end of a year Mercy had not so constrained her that once at least she should have given her lover such an earnest of joy that he should not despair. And if then she should put their love in jeopardy by refusing to do all his desire, it is certain that her first gift was a false lie, and that she did not come to him with a true heart, but wished to deceive him, and to play with him till she has killed

him. So then, if her lover leaves her it is no wrong at all; he is right to shun her.

"In all the world there is no dragon nor viper, no bear nor lion nor wolf nor any other savage beast but can be tamed by gentleness, if you will but try. Love is the conqueror's conqueror, but where Love goes for naught, and right, and reason, and tenderness, yet let Mercy appear and the battle is won. So the woman who will not have mercy is worse than any other creature.

"But now, since you advise me to answer this man, what shall I answer? He said, 'Alas!' What shall I say?"

"Lady, for Christ's sake believe me," said Alis, "if I were you I should know just how to answer him. I am sure it is right. He said 'Alas!' Now you must say, 'Alas! For why?' "

" 'Alas!—For why? That goes perfectly."

Good Lord! how often it was necessary that week to link those same words together, "Alas!—For why?" and to say them over before Sunday came round again and Guillaume should serve at Mass. Flamenca was in great agitation as she waited for him to bring her Peace and joy together.

When the time came there was no need to tell Guillaume to take the Peace and carry it round. But he took good care not to give it to lord Archambaut, so he did not come out of the choir until Archambaut had had it. Then he came, humbly and courteously, towards Flamenca, while Margarida and Alis watched his face, and each girl vowed under her breath, so that none should hear her, that she had never seen such a handsome clerk.

There is nothing that Love cannot teach. It taught Flamenca a pretty ruse. When she took the psalter she raised it a little, like a fencer, and turned

from Archambaut, who stood on her right hand, and bent a little to the other side. Then, when she lifted her lips from the page, she said, quite clearly but softly:

"For why?" and she raised her eyes and watched her lover's face, and saw his changing colour, and understood that he was certainly wise and discreet and secret; besides, he sang well, and his hair was beautiful; and she knew that so long as she kept it hidden, nothing which she said to him would be blurted out.

I do not know which of the two most desired to be home again and able to remember what they had seen of each other. Each of them thought that they had accomplished a great thing, but Guillaume was the more joyful because his desire was the greater. Once back in the inn he repeated "For why?" all day long. But you must not think that he did not go promptly to vespers and to all the Hours too; he did not miss one, early or late, nor did he forget a single psalm or response. If only he had been as devoted to God as to his lady he would have been the lord of all paradise!

When, that night, he tried to sleep it was no easier than if his eyes had been full of soot.

"Sleep, let us sleep soon," said his eyes. "Remember what we showed you this morning. Did you not see how she lifted the psalter when she kissed it, and bent to one side, that lovely creature, whom may God keep and cherish?

"You, Ears, are you not doing amiss because you are not even now full of the echo? For did she not say, 'For why?' There never was such a wealth of joy as you have to-day possessed. Now you should understand that Love is lord of the whole world, because he has done you such honour. Each of you ought to treasure this word of happy augury which

gives new life to my heart. Manna of heaven that falls more softly than the dew is not so sweet as this. Love has spoken to us this time; next it will be ours to answer, for she, the empress of all delight, quick to understand what is said to her, she has now thrown back the ball to us."

Then the heart spoke:

"Very well, so long as Mercy does not fail," and at once the fight began.

The mouth spoke angrily, and with a great oath:

"By Christ, Sire Heart, he is a fool who listens to you. Shame on all those who follow your counsel or trust in your crazy desires. You coward heart, why are you whining?"

"God help us, lady, what are you swearing for?"

"Even if I am swearing I shall not hit you. But I am amazed because you are never satisfied, but will go on grumbling all the time. Isn't it a very great mercy that she deigned to speak to us at all?"

"Lady, to my mind that was only a trifle."

"Then what is all this complaint about?"

"Well, I remember a knight who was with my lord the other day and who gave him the Montardin falcon the day we came from Montardi. You must remember, he told us that for a long time he had loved a fair and kind lady, young, and gracious and comely in all things. He had loved her more than two years before he said a word to her. But one day his desire overbore him, and he spoke what was in his heart. She replied, 'Do not think to love me, Sire, if you please, for you shall never have any profit of it."

" 'But, lady—never?'

" 'I am not quite sure.'

"Then because she said, 'I am not quite sure,' Love said to him, 'Surely she shall love you. Do not despair. Implore her, woo her, court her, serve her,

do all as you have been doing. I will see that you get what you desire.'

"So he went on till he had wasted the best part of his life, and he had nothing more to show for it than he had on the day he began. Therefore I think that I should be a fool if I should rejoice because you are comfortable. You, Ears and Eyes and Mouth, you take your ease when I am smitten with anguish and torment, because the pain is not yours.

"Women speak easily, and are ready to be gracious. If Flamenca did not answer she would fear that she might be thought either deaf or proud; if she answers, it does not mean that she loves. If she says 'For why?' to my 'Alas!' she is not asking me to love her, nor does she wish to love. You must think of something else."

So Guillaume tormented himself and disputed and strove with himself.

Flamenca also was in great uncertainty. She asked herself if he could have heard what she said. (He, on whose very heart it was written!)

"Alis," said she, "I have done what you told me, but did you hear, my dear girl?"

"Not I!"

"And you Margarida?"

"Lady, not I. How did you say it? Say it again to us, and then we shall know if he could hear. Will you do it, Madame? Here we are."

"Get up, Alis, and pretend that you are giving me the Peace as he did. Use 'The Story of Blanchfleur.' "

Alis jumped up and ran to a table where the storybook lay which Flamenca had bidden her use for the Peace. She came with it to her lady, but Flamenca could hardly help laughing when she saw how nearly Alis was laughing at the play.

Flamenca lifted the story-book up, away from the right, and bent a little to the left, and when she pretended to kiss it she said, "For why?" and then asked at once, "Now did you hear?"

"Yes, Madame, surely. If you spoke in that tone your clerk will have heard it clearly."

That week, when they went to church, certain that Guillaume would answer, they remembered this lesson.

When the time came you may be sure that Guillaume did not delay. He took the Peace and carried it into the church through all the people. He came at once towards his lady, who did not hold her veil as closely about her as usual, so that she might hear the better.

When he took the Peace from her, he said:

"I'm dying," and went away at once, so that no one would have known that he had spoken. If there had always been an understanding between them they could not have been in more perfect accord, but anyone who saw them would have thought that neither cared a pin for the other. And yet Love did so subtly unite them that Guillaume did his wooing with lord Archambaut looking on; and Archambaut's wife even vouchsafed an answer, and was impatient for her turn to come. A jealous man is lord of Mount-Fool if he thinks to prevent a woman doing what she pleases; she will never stay for him.

When she got back to her room Flamenca lay down on the bed. . . . [*When dinner was ready she said*] that she did not wish to dine so soon, so she told Sire Archambaut to go out and enjoy himself. Off he went, very bad-tempered and grumbling to himself.

Then Flamenca said:

"There. That's what you get for being jealous

and suspicious and surly," and when he had gone dismally away she got up and laughed and said:

"Come here! come here, girls! Do you want to hear good news?"

"Oh! Madame, for God's sake tell us. My lord has gone off very cross, and without his dinner, and he will soon be back again."

"Listen then to the lesson I have learnt. Nothing could be simpler nor more courteous. He said, 'I'm dying.'"

Then said Alis:

"As God helps me, you are caught now. Madame, you ought to do a heavy penance and confess yourself guilty against Love for having believed that this man could dream of anything to offend you."

Margarida too could not contain herself for joy.

"Lady," she said, "I can swear without perjury that I never have seen such a handsome clerk before. And the more I think of his appearance, the more courtly and accomplished he seems to me. If his mind is like his looks I know of no man so charming; he deserves to be loved forthwith. God grant, Madame, that you should desire to discover his feelings. And do not be surprised that we wish you to love him, for it is much pleasanter to talk about a lover than about a husband who is making you wretched. And now, think about an answer; there is need, for my lord will not be long away. But we shall soon have it, because I believe I have thought of a good one. Only before I tell it you, you shall tell yours, and Alis hers."

"My dear, why should we try to think if you have a good one?"

"Do you wish me to say it then, Madame?"

"Do I wish? Please do, my dear!"

"Now listen if this goes well: 'Alas!'—'For why?'

—'I'm dying.'—'What of?'—'What of?' You see? Now, Madame, is not that good?"

"Margarida, you have hit it. You are a wonder."

"Oh! yes, Madame, there never was a greater except you and Alis."

Just then Archambaut came in, bellowing like a bull and tearing at his hair in his rage. Said he:

"What are you doing? Are you better? You will be quite well when you have had dinner."

"Lord," answered Margarida, "she needs a better remedy than that," and she put out her tongue at him, while the others laughed behind their hands.

As for Guillaume he got no peace nor rest. All day long he said her words over to himself, repeating them and interpreting them again. He avoided company as much as he could, for he was his own best company, and lonely when there were people with him.

" 'I'm dying,' " said he, "yea, verily. Because I love alone, I alone die. I die alone because alone I love. Love and my heart shall bear the blame, for each has caused my death though they have lifted no hand against me. If anyone should put a knife into a madman's hand, and he should slay himself, then he who gave the knife is in danger of justice. So I may well accuse Love and my heart of homicide, for they are the cause of my death. In this very way Ænæas killed Dido though he laid no hand on her.

"Ah! fair Lord God, will she never have mercy on me? Will she never have regard to him whom she might entirely heal? Truly, no; I might as well die. And how can she grieve for my sorrow unless she shares it? Who knows not pain knows not mercy either. But if she had asked mercy of me I would have given it to her even before she asked it, for I know both joy and sorrow, and I know whence

mercy comes. The sorrow and misery of another are the very stuff and essence of mercy, for if, led by kind charity, through a secret channel, Pity descends into my heart for the sake of the pain that another suffers, then this is the spring and root of mercy. And if then Pity so triumphs over me that I hold myself my lady's knight to defend her, if I might but do it, then this is mercy's flower. And if then she is so moved that she gives me aid without feigning, that is the fruit of mercy, for mercy is a thing of flower and fruit flourishing from a happy root, and brings with her kind Charity, in whom all goodness is crowned.

"Herein is the truth of this subtlety which I have proven for myself—namely, that mercy is nothing without love. For by love comes such tenderness that a man is grieved for the griefs of another. Never before have I been so pitiful, nor so grieved for another's grief; but now Love has so dealt with me that I have pity for my lady because she is a prisoner against her will; and there is no pain that I would not choose to have rather than that she should suffer it, and as for any happiness, I would rather she had it than I—and this is love and right. From love springs mercy, and in love mercy has her birth, and that is why she is so gracious, and without love, mercy bears no fruit.

"But I shall have a very late harvest if I wait for my lady to compassionate my sorrow until mercy comes into her heart, or if I wait for her to make some sign of good-will towards me, or until that good-will is constant enough to cure all my pain.

"Love, Love you are too tardy with your help. The weeks are too long and the words too short and too hard pressed. There will be other harvests soon, and I have sown so little. Do you think it is much profit to have sown only two measures of seed? I

think my corn will spring late, and grain does not ripen to the harvest if you delay till the ice comes and the white hoar-frost. And yet they say that neither wind nor frost can blight a destined fruitage.

"I do not know why I am so troubled, for by God's mercy, as I have sown, so shall my harvest be. Yet never before was 'Alas!' sown to lie in the damp earth for seven days, and then on the eighth to sprout. May God of his mercy grant it growth and make it spring for my joy! For there is no creature in all the world from whom I hope for good, except from her in whom all good is crowned. I have never known a sick man who would long for water from the river, but all his desire is for a draught from the spring. And the wild dog-rose is of little worth beside the rose of the garden. My lady is the spring, my lady is the rose, made fair and sweetly watered by every fair thing, and so much do I desire her that every thought of her is sweet to me, and the more I think upon her the more I wish to think, so that I can never be satisfied. But ah! what it would be if I held her in my arms to touch and kiss and have my will of her!

"I have said too much without her leave, for I have spoken of holding her in my arms, and it is not mine to hold her, nor would I have anything I wish for except by her consent. My overwhelming desire has made me a fool and presumptuous; but yet Love allows it me, for often he has given her to my arms and to my will as I slept. But I should say of a certainty that if Love has given me any happiness, waking or sleeping, I ought to keep it secret. And even if Love has cheated me I ought to chasten my tongue so that I never speak of it, unless Love himself commands me to, for I am entirely under his rule and should do nothing but what he bids."

That Sunday the workmen came. They were much amazed at the oath that was required of them before they were told about the work which they had to do. They were good workmen, who would do whatever was needed. In the daytime they stayed in the house, and at night they worked by candle-light, and they were all very careful not to strike such blows as should make any noise, and not to let there be any sound of cracking wood or ringing iron there. In a week they had finished everything, and tidied up each end of the passage so that no one would know that it had ever been touched. Guillaume himself who had had it done, and knew of it, could hardly tell where it was. He went to and fro often by this passage, carefully moving the stones, and did everything he could to discover if it could be improved in any way.

On the eighth day the workmen departed, and Guillaume went to church; he was not slack in his service there. He took good care not to miss taking round the Peace when it was time, for his mind was set on this.

So he gave it to his lady and took it from her again in the proper way, as if he had no other thought in his mind.

But, "What of?" Flamenca asked him, and he caught the word and hid it deep in his heart.

And then she turned away and concealed herself in the alcove where Love waited on her to encourage her, bidding her not to be loth to suffer for a little while, because, sooner than she thought, her deliverance would come.

Alis and Margarida were watching Guillaume, and the more closely they looked, the more they found to look at, for they had never seen his equal for beauty.

They came back to the house and into Flamenca's room, and Lord Archambaut went away. Then:

"Little Margarida, my dear child," said Flamenca, "now I have said the word which you taught me so cleverly."

"Lady, God be thanked! so long as he heard it as well as you heard him."

"My dear, do not be agitated. Your heart can beat in peace, for I promise you that, although he went away so quickly, he could easily hear it if he wished. So do not be afraid."

Said Alis:

"How few holy-days there are now, Madame, compared with what there are generally. You would think the year and this midsummer had a grudge against us, for they do not help us at all. There are generally holidays coming along all the time. Can there really be so few in the summer! Here we have five weeks of summer with no holidays but Sundays. But this clerk will make the best of those! Sundays will be very pleasant now, thanks to God and this clerk. Blessings on the man who first taught him his letters, for he understands that no man is worth his salt without learning, and a great man who knows nothing of letters loses much of his worth, and a woman is the more sought after if she is adorned with a little learning. For tell me now, what would you have done without all your knowledge during these two years of distress? You would have been dead in misery. But though you are never so troubled, yet, when you read, your troubles are fogotten."

Flamenca had to hug her then, and said:

"My dear, indeed you are no fool, and I agree with you that leisure is no pleasure for an unlearned man, but that he is alive and yet like one dead. And wherever you look you will never find a man of

learning who does not wish to know still more, nor one who only knows a little and would not know more if he could. If you could buy knowledge there isn't a miser even who would not buy at least a bit if he could find some for sale. As for this man, if he were not educated he would not have meddled in this matter."

Meanwhile Guillaume was repeating the words, and setting them together.

" 'What of?' " said he, "That is what she asks me, she who has given me this 'What of.' But I have much to be thankful for, since she wants me to answer, or she would not deign to ask 'What of?' I shall not need to think much about my answer, for I know that love is the sickness from which I suffer, and this love is for her who has asked me 'What of?', and I am proud of my true love for her. There is nothing else that I can whisper which she could remember so easily, so may such good fortune come of it as she could wish or desire, or my prayers could win for her.

"For by great courtesy she thinks of such a clever means that her words match perfectly with mine, and the more I reflect upon them the more I see that they combine together better even than if I had myself devised them.

"Can it be that she wishes me well? To answer so aptly makes me think that she desires my good. If she did not, she would not think of me, and if she did not think of me she would not speak to me—that is how I argue. Certainly she shall know what it is that slays me, and why, the other day, I said, 'I'm dying.' "

On Rogation Sunday at Tierce, Guillaume dusted the Peace thoroughly. Not for anything would he have neglected his Peace, and he was on the look-out

for the moment to come. When it came, he said to his lady so that she could clearly hear it:

"Of love," and turned away.

Lord Archambaut was not asleep. Before anyone else, he left the church. He had not the slightest intention of going out of the house to amuse himself after dinner, but God willed that a message should come to him which took and kept him out of the house all day.

Flamenca was a little agitated, and more distressed than usual, so that she lay sadly on her bed. Margarida was with her, and she said:

"Madame, how goes it? I told you that to-day you would know if he had heard the word I told you to say."

"Ah! my dear sweet child, you will never guess unless I tell you. It is quite different from what you thought. He says that he is wounded through with love, that he is sick with love, and dying of love. I have never seen a man so quickly the victim of love for a woman he does not know."

Alis pounced on the news, and she must say her say:

"Lady, of what injury did you think he was complaining then? He would not come and accuse you if he had been beaten or robbed. I knew at once that he loved you. I knew what was his suit against you. I told you at once, if you will only remember, that such was his charge against you, and that you should have no doubt that he loved you. But now you must think how you will answer him."

"My dear, I shan't have to think about that, for I am going to ask him, 'For whom?' And when I know as certainly for whom, as I know of what he suffers, then I shall have greater need of counsel than ever."

"Never," Alis replied, "did counsel fail where two

such lovers were in agreement. There is nothing to stand between you and your desire, if only you do not conceal your feelings too closely, or keep your heart a prisoner too long. Remember how savage my lord is, and how he is always scolding. But God has given you this unhappiness for your good, and so that your bliss will be the sweeter. Indeed, it is to make your blessedness more blessed that God has given you such a husband. God willing, there will yet come a time when these sorrows shall be salt to your joy. Therefore, Madame, do not be downcast."

On Sunday, when the time came to take the Peace, Flamenca asked, as she touched the book:

"For whom?"

When he heard this 'For whom?' Guillaume was thunder-struck. When he was alone again," 'For whom?' " he said, " 'For whom?' " again and again. "Dear God!" he said, "is this a jest? She says 'For whom?' Does she doubt that I love her with a perfect heart? Surely she well knows all my soul, and that I ask nothing from any other but her, and that I am totally surrendered to her, and that by her I am utterly vanquished?

"But, since it pleases her to endure the telling of all my desire, glad am I to tell her all. For her sake I suffer martyrdom, for her sake Love tortures me with a sweet delicious agony, so that the worse it grieves me the more I would have it, and never wish to be cured."

Flamenca and her two maids, those sensible wenches, were talking it all over together whenever they could, and that was often, and by every repetition of the words they stirred up the fire of love.

On Whitsunday Guillaume brought the Peace, and before he went back to the priest, said, very fearfully:

"For you."

In her heart Flamenca communed with herself:

"This young noble who is wooing me is a man of passing great valour. I think that I must be the first ever to be thus courted, for, after a brief sight and few meetings he has come from loving to wooing. And my husband is a cruel fool to keep me so close shut up. But now, if I choose, I have found someone who will set me free from his prison, so that his safe-keeping will be all in vain."

So when her maidens were with her she said to them with a sigh:

"What shall I say now? To-morrow I shall be able to speak, and it will be discourteous if I miss my turn in the game."

"Lady," Margarida answered at once, "if you would be so kind as to tell us what you feel we should know better how to advise you. But whatever you decide you will not allow this young lord, whom Love has sent, to love and woo you in vain. Truly, Madame, you ought to do everything in your power to please this man whom Love has granted you, because he has so earnestly set to work to help and release you."

Then Alis broke in:

"Madame, too long waiting wakes the slanderers, and speaking fair and doing nothing chills a willing heart. So all the gift I give you is this counsel—do not conceal your heart any longer. Let him know that you gladly accept his love, his liking, and his friendship, for he is a prince of courtesy. I believe that he is a man so subtle and ingenious, and such a lover, that he will bring no danger either on you or himself, for no one will know that you love him or he you. And I tell you this, that when you are together there is not such another two in all the world—no

not even if it were the sun and the moon—for if he is Lord, you are Lady of the Sun. So I beseech you, since Love has ordered it, do not resist his devices any more. It would be pure unreason if this game failed by your fault. So answer him with a doubtful word to make him both hope and fear."

"My dear child, if it please you, I will ask him only this, 'And I——?' for this is such a dark saying that he will know not by it that I love him, nor yet will he despair."

"By Heaven!" cried Margarida, "do not forget that, for it is the best of all."

"My dear, I shall not forget it. If God wills I will say it to-morrow."

The longed-for time came, and when Flamenca gave back the Peace she said softly:

"And I——?"

Guillaume did not linger but went on at once, and to himself he said:

"These words on the one hand comfort me, and on the other dismay me. I do not know what hope there is for me in that 'And I——?' It is neither good nor bad. 'And I——?' It says neither yes nor no. But to my mind it seems as if I ought to take this doubtful saying as more yes than no. She knows well how to find words of a nice balance. Truly this is a royal woman who can devise words so fit to match my own.

"And I declare to you, fair Lord God, that you may very easily come to terms with me about my share of Paradise. I'll throw you for it. I'll take all the prophets and apostles to witness that I will give all the rent I have in France to build churches and bridges, if only you will let me have my lady, with her will and consent. But without it I want nothing that you can give me, neither her nor all your wealth, not

even [*if it were*] . . . so much that I did not know what to do with it, and if I were emperor of the world into the bargain."

That was a very happy week; his heart was made well again by those words, "And I——?" He delighted to think of them; he did not deceive himself; he knew the value of them, but he explained them to himself in many ways. Ah! he gave them a very good signification. For, said he:

"God help me! when she said 'And I——?' it was as much as to say, 'I will do everything that I can do.' Neither her wit nor her will fail, if only power made a third."

On the octave of Whitsunday they kept the feast of Saint Barnabas, but it is only a little feast, and Flamenca would not have been allowed to set foot outside the tower on Saint Barnabas's account any more than for a mere confessor for whom no feast is kept, if it had not happened to fall on a Sunday.

That day, when the time came, Guillaume said to his lady, as true love had taught him:

"Heal me!"

Flamenca pondered it in her heart, and to herself she said:

"How can I heal the sickness which another feels? I do not know how I can meddle in this, and the more I think of it the less I find a hope or chance of salving the wound that he suffers for my sake, as he told me, and as, truly, I believe. This is a brave thing that he has done, and a sure proof that he feels the sting of love is that ever he took up this suit. And even if he had not told me so, yet I do think that this love is for me, because if it were for another, surely he would not have appealed to me!"

She told her maidens what she had been thinking of in church, and they agreed and praised this courage

highly, but in the end they advised her to ask "How?" for they could not think how to discover any device by which she might heal Love's wound in him that begged for healing. Also they said, "He has done so much that he will be able to find some happy device for you and for himself, so that both may rejoice."

"God in his mercy grant it," said Flamenca, "because I can see no way in which I may have more joy of him, nor he of me, than we have at this present.'

" ' In a little minute God has done it,' " said Alis, "and, 'A stout heart is stronger than an evil star.' If he can contrive so that my lord does not see what is happening, everyone else will be quite blind. Blind! yes indeed, the whole world, for his simplicity and innocence will throw dust in all eyes. And since he is of such a subtle invention that in the sight of all he has been able to speak to you so that none but you should hear, certainly he will soon have some clever device to bring you to each other, if you will only agree to what he says."

Flamenca reflected on this advice until the feast of Saint John, which fell on the next Saturday, and that day Guillaume did not give his lady the Peace for nothing, for when she had taken it she said softly:

"How?" and as she took the psalter she almost touched his fingers with hers.

So Saint John had done very courteously, since that day he had allowed Guillaume to receive such a clear sign. And Guillaume would always revere him for it.

Back to the choir he went rejoicing, and when they had recited the Office he went joyfully to the inn with his friends, Dom Justin and the host. After dinner he did not go to sleep, but went off to his bed and stayed there, repeating in his mind all that had

been spoken. When he came to that word "How?" he almost sang for joy, and said:

"My sweetest lady, very soon, if only you will trust in me, I shall have found a good contrivance to set us both free—you from your husband's prison, and me from the pangs of love that torture me daily. For if mercy be my aid, and if you have mercy on me as you ought to have, then we shall forget our pain in our common joy. And such a joy may truly be called common, because in it, of two persons one is made, so that we may say, 'All is ours,' for all is mine and all is yours, and each one has it for his own. I am yours and you are mine, for thus it is in love, that what belongs to one belongs also to the other."

On the Sunday after Saint John's day Guillaume did not neglect to do his duty. He came out from the choir gladly, and went to his lady, and as he gave her the Peace he whispered:

"By a means."

Flamenca told this to her maids, and begged them to counsel her, for now a time had come when she had great need of counsel.

Alis said, "I will not hide from you what I think any more than I did at first. God has sent this man, and I believe he has thought of some good way of setting you free. So, if you will, answer him thus, 'Take it!' for if he does not take it, I do not think you will."

Margarida agreed entirely. Said she:

"It is clear that any man who knows how to woo as this man does, must know everything that pertains to the craft of love; devices, and tricks, and secret means. If we were living in the days of old, and I found such a lover, I should think he was Jupiter or some other of the amorous gods. Certainly I should bid him, 'Take it!' for you cannot afford to dally over

this wooing as those ladies can who have leisure in plenty. They feed their true lovers with false seeming till these give up their wooing for sheer weariness and for disgust at their lies. Then the women are sorry at what they have done, when it is no use to be sorry, 'For he that will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay.' "

Flamenca sighed and blushed, and just then Alis sneezed.

"All will be well," she cried. "Our business will go well because of my sneeze."

"God bless you, Alis," said Flamenca, "for comforting me so. You always cheer me. And now I know what you think, and that you are advising me sincerely, I will follow your advice.

"But yet, to confess openly that I desire his love—I do not know if it will dishonour me to consent freely to the love of this man."

"Lady," said Alis, "if Love wills it, it is no dishonour. If you did not love him dearly, but still followed our advice, that would not be well. But when Love holds the reins, and good counsel and desire, then one act of folly is better than all sense. And yet it is sense, and no folly, and as my witnesses to that I call all the wise and merry and courteous, and those who hate jealousy; indeed I do not know anyone who is such a fool that he will not bear witness to this, not even my lord himself, if it came into court, and he heard the case pleaded."

Next Thursday was the day of the passion of the two glorious apostles who are the greatest princes in heaven after my lord Saint Michael. And on this day of good augury, Flamenca gave to Guillaume assurance of her love when he came to her, and she gave him another bounty, full of love and delicacy, for with sweet courtesy she let him see more than ever of

her eyes and her mouth and her chin. Also she raised her eyes and looked right into his for longer than she had ever looked before, because the Adversary standing at her right hand made this difficult.

Guillaume was full of bliss because of the great hope his lady had given. He was sure now that Love would have him surpass all others—blessing on him for granting such ease of heart!

That day he bade the host come to him, and he obeyed willingly, for he got a very good dinner with the young lord and his people. Guillaume also gave the host leave to come back again, because he now felt better so there was no need for him to be alone as before, nor did he need the ointments nor the baths so frequently.

The next time that he could speak to his lady he said:

"I have!"

She was amazed. She looked at him most sweetly, so that it was as if they kissed each other in their looking, and as if their eyes and hearts embraced. Indeed, such joy came from this kiss that each felt perfectly healed.

To herself Flamenca said:

"Can it be that in iii days he has thought of a way so that I may cure him? I have been of little faith. I have done wrong to doubt. He cannot have thought of it on the spur of the moment. He has thought how he may do my pleasure, and therefore I must be sure never to cross him in anything.

"But iii days will seem a week to me until I know what is the device that he has imagined. I vow before God that if he can contrive so that we may come together, I will be his for ever. He alone has cared to succour me, and he alone shall have my love.

He alone has cared to rescue me from death, and him alone will I ever serve.

"I owe little love to the knights of my own country, since for two years I have lived in bitter grief, and not one of them seems to have cared. And those of this land who have seen me buried alive and languishing in misery—they have not dared, or cared, or wished to help me. If they say they are good knights, they lie, for they have left a poor woman, a stranger, to her death.

"But if this man, who has so proved himself, should win me, he ought never to change for whatever vile-hearted slanderers may say, who with their mouths speak foolishness, and in their hearts think only of treachery.

"And now, since God has ordained that this knight should be clerkly and courtly, he has ransomed all the others from the ill-will that I justly bear them, since they have dealt so ill by me.

"But it is very right that I should love this man who has put himself in certain danger of death for me, and out of this peril I believe God will deliver him, as He has helped him up to now. I will pray so with all my heart, and I am sure that God will hear me who knows well all my need."

So she was thinking while she knelt in church.

When Mass was over they went back to the house, and as soon as the jealous one had left the tower, Flamenca spoke:

"My girls," she said, "your words and your prayers have so wrought on me that I am not unwilling to love this man, since he seems to me so handsome and so noble. And to-day he has told me that he has taken a means, but I do not yet know what it is."

Alis answered her promptly. Said she:

"Lady, we thank God that you have put yourself into our hands, for if good comes of it we shall have brought you happiness; but if evil, then all the fault will be ours, and each of us would rather be punished than that you should have any blame. But God, who truly pardons and who knows all—who knows how ill you have been treated, and how you have been bound as if with chains—He will heal you of all your sorrow and bring you perfect joy; and all this if only you will keep faith with him who so labours for your sake, and if you will love him with a true, entire, and loyal love. Then I promise you, Madame, that everything will turn out for your happiness.

"So, since he has told you that he has found a means to help both himself and you, ask him, 'What means?' for that is best. And then if his plan pleases you, you will be able to consent readily to all his design."

Margarida broke in then:

"Your desire, Madame, must be a thousand times greater than his, for he is free to do what he wills, and there is only one captivity for him, which now is a joyful thing, and pleasant by means of your love. But you are twice a prisoner. Your husband keeps you in prison, and every day there are strife and threats, and never a pleasant word. But besides that, you are let from doing all that beauty and honour and joy and youth would do, and so, since you cannot compass your pleasure you are a captive, and held in a twofold prison by compulsion and distress. The compulsion keeps you powerless, and the distress wretched. But for him, he lacks nothing but you; all the rest of the world is in his hand, while you are lost to the world and it to you, since it does nothing to help you. Therefore it stands to reason that in his healing you will receive a greater cure than he, for

you will be twice healed, but he, only of the pain that he suffers for your sake.'"

Said Flamenca:

"Who taught you such dialectic, Margarida? If you had studied Arithmetic, Astronomy, and Music you could not have better prescribed the medicine for the ills which I have long suffered. I will never hide my thoughts from you, for since I know how wise you are I shall want you to counsel and direct me. You and Alis and I shall be no longer as several persons, since our hearts are one; but that heart belongs to him who is the cure of all my pain."

At the end of that week Flamenca asked:

"What means?"

At the end of another Guillaume answered her:

"You'll go," but did not tell her where, nor where not, because he could not. So next time Flamenca, on Saint Mary Magdalen's day in the morning, asked him:

"And where?"

Next day Guillaume replied:

"To the baths."

So now Flamenca knew where, and guessed at once that he must have contrived some device by which he might come to her in the baths, and she prayed to God and to All Saints that the thing might be so managed that it should not bring her into reproach.

When she told all this to her maids, both said:

"This is good news you tell us, Madame. But when shall we go to the baths? Now we know where, we are impatient to know when."

"Shall I ask him when?"

"Oh! Madame, yes. We are dying to know, since he had no time to tell you which day."

"Do not die, for I can ask him on Sunday, since that is the blessed feast of Saint James of Compostella."

On that morning, then, as soon as she might, she asked him:

"When?"

Guillaume was in ecstasy because his lady had asked him the day. He longed to answer her at once, but he would have let himself be branded with a red-hot iron before he would have said a word to her which might have been heard. So he had to wait for four days, and then on the fifth he told her:

"Soon, for my joy," and went quickly away.

"Now," said Flamenca to herself, "now I may choose whether I will languish thus for ever, or whether I will—since I may if I will—once for all give my heart the hope of healing. If I might but once come there where Love and Joy await me, I need not fear sorrow any more, nor doubt of my life, since, once for all, I shall be healed.

"There is no one now who can counsel me, or make my answer for me, and I have no longer respite than until to-morrow. I must answer him then, for as the priest told us to-day, Sunday is Saint Peter's day and the first of August. So, if Love would have us one, I pray him, if he will, to let me find an answer that shall bring me happiness."

Then they came out of church, and as soon as she could, Margarida asked her when the day was to be.

"My sweet thing," answered Flamenca, "the day is for us to choose, for he is ready any day. But now the bitterness of a new thought has extinguished the joy of love that was in my heart, as a smoke swallows the shining of a little light."

Said Alis:

"God, who is the defence and keeper of all that

is, God defend the joy that lightens in your heart, and let no harmful thought come near you. True love is worthless without fear and sorrow, for in trouble love is purified, and without fear there is no lasting love.

"But there is one evil fear that kills Love, and murders him, and there is another good fear which seasons the joy of Love. One is the flower and the other the leaf. One is joy, and the other is sorrow. And so you will know true lovers because they are fearful and troubled."

"Dear girl, truly I love him, and I do not know whom to blame for my suffering, for Fear and Love and Shame so torture me that it is as if each were pricking my heart with needles and pins. Fear chastens and threatens me, and forbids me to do this thing, which my lord will not by any means take as a joke, for if I do it he will have me burned. Then Shame tells me to keep myself clear of the blame that I should have in everyone's eyes if I do it. And then, on the other hand, Love says to me that Shame and Fear never were stout-hearted and never will be, and that she is not true lover who is turned aside from doing her heart's bidding by Shame and Fear.

"Ovid declares that Love is King and lord, and will take tribute from all alive, but as yet I have paid nothing. If Love loses his rights over me it will be to his shame and my loss, for if the dues go unpaid, the fief escheats—that is how Love rules.

"Now, since Love has come to me, I do not know how to turn him out of doors, for he has come to me demanding lodging as his right. He has sent me a courteous messenger to know whether I will shelter him or no, and since he summons me with such gentleness, and of right, I am afraid that if I put any hindrance in his way I shall suffer for it, since when

one who knows the right fails to do it, that is a greater transgression than in one who does not know the right.

"I know for certain that Love has right over women—over all, and not only over one. Every woman should know this, that his claim begins at thirteen years, and if any one dally so long that at seventeen she has paid nothing, then the fief escheats, unless in mercy Love forgoes his dues. And if a woman passes xxi years without paying at least a third, or a quarter, or a half, never shall she have the fief entire, but she shall be like a hired soldier, and go along with the common folk, and be thankful if she ever gets a word or a welcome from Love.

"Therefore every woman should eschew pride while she may, for though, if she loses a chance in another business she may recover it, in this of love, if she fails, she cannot contrive that beauty and youth should ever come back to her. And therefore I say, and it is all in a few words—either grant or refuse."

Then sighs oppressed her, and sobs, and yawns, and her heart almost failed her, and she wept pitifully.

"Alas!" she cried, "alas that I was born and grew to womanhood, for my life is my misfortune. I have one comfort only, and that is——? Ah, God! that is that I shall find death in this wound that Love has given me, so that I can no longer endure against him. Love, you are an evil archer, since you have smitten me so ill. Never did you draw your bow to such an evil aim, and never have I been so smitten, nor never thought to be, simply because I love.

"But since I must suffer your wounds, which are so dear to me that the deeper they are the sweeter to me, there is nothing now for me to do but to give you lodging. So come, alight at your hostelry; you have none other so loyal, for my body is heartily yours,

and shall be your chamber and your hostelry where you shall never find disobedience. I will do everything that you desire, and to him who comes in your name bidding me do your will, I will answer freely, 'It is my pleasure,' for otherwise I cannot live."

At this she fainted away, and lay so long in a swoon that Lord Archambaut came back before she recovered. Alis held her mistress in her arms, terrified lest when she recovered Flamenca should say anything by which Archambaut should know that she had swooned for love. So there she was, weeping and crying, "Lady, look, here is my lord!"

She cried so loud, "Look, here is my lord," that Flamenca heard her, and before ever she said a word, she was thinking how to answer Lord Archambaut when he spoke to her.

"Lady," said he, "what is the matter? How are you?"

The jealous fellow was much upset; he brought cold water at once, and threw it on her face.

She opened her eyes and looked up, and sighed deeply, and he asked her what ailed her.

"Sire," she said, "I have a pain at my heart which drives me mad, and almost kills me. Indeed I think I shall die of it unless I have a doctor's advice about it."

"Lady, I think it would do you good if every day you would take a little nutmeg."

"Fair dear lord, I had this pain once before, but I got better of it when I took the baths, and so I would like to take them on Wednesday, if it please you, because the moon is waning now. But in three days it will be gone, and I shall recover from this dreadful illness that almost kills me."

"Lady, I am quite willing that you should take the baths. You must not try to do without them.

But also give candles to the saints, and above all do not neglect Saint Peter, whose feast it was on Tuesday. I would like you to have a big candle for him—such a fine one that everyone will wonder at it."

"Ah! Sire, you are very kind. But if you please, go away now and leave me for a little, and see about getting ready the baths."

"I will see to it," he answered, and went out very cross. He shut the door carefully and locked it and hung the key at his belt, and then went off, and found Peire Gui, who was sitting on his steps.

Said Archambaut to him:

"Get your baths washed out, for my lady wants to take them. Have them ready for Wednesday, as she is waiting for the moon."

"Fair dear Sire," Peire Gui answered at once, "it shall be done certainly."

When Flamenca had recovered from her agitation, and Sire Archambaut had gone out, sad and sorry and cross, she began to weep and sigh and complain, crying out upon Love. But she had to wait till Tuesday, and then she said:

"Gladly," because that was the most gracious way she could think of in which to say yes. And besides that, she just touched Guillaume's right hand with her left, for love, and secretly.

Then she turned away and sat down, for it was too much for her, and no wonder; she might well be troubled and greatly fearful, because she had just granted away her love, and knew not at all to whom. (But she very soon will know; she has not much longer to wait, unless he runs away; for he will tell her who he is directly she asks him.)

When Guillaume heard that "Gladly," his heart laughed for very joy. When evening came he heard his host speaking to ii servants:

"Now, lads," said he, "make ready the baths. Wash them all out from end to end, and throw away all the water that is in them now, and bring fresh, and see that you bring plenty, for my lady is going to bathe on the first convenient day."

Guillaume gave no sign of having heard, but he knew very well that this bathing was for his sake, and that by it Archambaut would be cheated, for you must not think that Flamenca will spare him, since now she has passed her word, and he will find no one to be sorry for him either.

On Wednesday, at daybreak, Flamenca began to complain, and well she might, for all that night she had not slept a wink. She called softly to her husband, and spoke to him pitifully, struggling with her sighs:

"Never, never have I felt so ill as I do now. Get up! Do not be angry, for soon you will be rid of me, and indeed I would rather die than live, so great is my pain and distress. If the baths do not a little lighten this sickness, I am as good as dead."

"You will not die of this. The baths will cure you. Do not be afraid, but take comfort, and give up wishing for death."

The maids were up and dressed already, and, said they, "It is quite time to be going." So they took their basins and ointments and all their gear, and Archambaut got up, and came out from the tower, not very well pleased, but leading his wife by the hand to meet her lover. So far as I can see, he had not gained much by his jealousy!

In the baths he poked about and examined all the corners, but that was little use, for he found exactly the same number of entrances there as usual. Then he went out, and locked the door and carried off the key with him.

Within the baths the maids were careful. At once they made all safe by a big stout bar that closed the door from side to side. Then they began to think about what they had done, and they looked at each other askance, and, said they:

"Madame, what shall we do now? We cannot imagine where nor how he will come in. But he chose this place."

"I do not know either," said Flamenca, "for I see nothing anywhere which is different from usual. But I shall not undress myself, for I have not come here to bathe, but so that I may speak with him."

While they were thus at a stand, they heard a small sound on one side of the baths. At once each knew that it was he for whom they waited, and there was nothing now to keep him from them.

And then, as they watched, Guillaume lifted the stone, and sprouted and burgeoned out of the earth.

Now if any ask me how he looked when he came, I will tell them. In his hand he carried a candle; his shirt and breeches were of Rheims linen, very fine, and well-made too; his bliaut was of ciclatoun, of a good cut, fitting close where it should and full where it should; the narrow belt that he wore became him mighty well. He had on hose of silk embroidered with flowers of many colours that fitted him so well and sweetly that you would have said he had been born in them. On his head he wore a linen coif with a pattern of dots finely worked in silk; this was not to hide his tonsure, but to keep the lime of the tunnel out of his hair. True love had given him a little of Love's own pallor, but it was not unbecoming; on the contrary, it suited him so well that he looked even handsomer than usual.

Down he went on his knees before his lady, and spoke:

"Lady," said he, "God who made you and ordained that you should have no equal for beauty or courtesy, keep you and your company!" and he bowed right down to her feet.

Flamenca answered him:

"Fair Sire, God who is all truth and who will have us like to Him, save you and grant you to accomplish all your desire."

"Sweet lady, all my desire, my thought, and my care—all this is you alone, to whom I am given, and if you wish me this blessing, then all my desire is accomplished."

"Fair Sire, since God has granted that we should come together, you shall not say when you part from me that you have lacked anything that is in my gift. I see well that you are such a proper man, so fair, so gentle, and so courteous, that for a long time now you have had all my heart and my love, and now behold here am I myself come to do your pleasure," and with that she put her arms about him sweetly and kissed him.

So now Sire Archambaut can dance about the ash tree if he likes, for I do not think that Flamenca will deny herself a lover on his account.

Guillaume kissed her then and took her in his arms, and to all who love us I pray God give such joy as this, until they may have a better.

Now Guillaume was sure of her love, and he said:

"My lady, if it please you we may go by a new way, made for my use and yours, and secure from fear of watchers, into my room, from which so many times I have looked out at the tower where you are."

"Fair sweet friend, be it as you choose. I will go where you bid me, for I know well that if it is in your power you will bring me back safe and sound. Now in Fortune's name lead me there."

So Guillaume showed her the way. The tunnel was not dark, because he had candles burning there, and they came to his room sooner than they thought. They found it very richly furnished with carpets and benches and coverings fit for a king, and green branches, and hangings—but I do not intend to tell you of all the plenishings.

They sat down together on a low bed, and Margarida and Alis sat on the floor on a cushion. Guillaume welcomed them very courteously, and asked them to grant him their good-will.

"It is not fitting," said Flamenca, "fair sweet friend, that you should ask them for anything. You shall not by any means of theirs miss anything of your desire."

So Guillaume thanked the two girls, and then turned to his lady.

"Sweet lady," said he, "now we are together I thank you for the martyrdom which I have suffered so long because of you. You do not know yet who I am, except that Love has told you that I am your man in very truth."

"Fair Sire, I know very well that you are noble and high-born. I know it from your valiance in choosing to be my lover, for if you had not been so you would never have given a thought to me."

Then Guillaume told her from beginning to end who he was and how he came there, and in what manner he had carried himself since he came to Bourbon. When she had heard all this she was so joyful that she gave herself utterly to him; she put her arms about his neck and kissed him close, and now she feared nothing, but cared only how to serve him without grudging, and to kiss and cherish him, and to do all the will of Love.

So neither their eyes nor lips nor hands were idle,

but they held each other close, and kissed, and neither hid their love from the other, so that their joy was full. Each was eager to glory in the pain and long desire that had been borne for the other's sake, and that day Love saw that they missed no joy, but he sweetly called and urged them, and lit them with his flame to such bliss that they clean forgot all the travail that had gone before.

These were certainly true lovers; there are few like them nowadays, but I care nothing for that, for I know one man at least who would be as good as they, if only he could find his dear friend.

Guillaume did not try too many clerkly persuasions. He asked for nothing more than his lady offered to give, and she was not loth to do him pleasure, but showed him such honour and delight that Mercy herself could not have been more gracious, and Mercy, I take it, is the queen of graciousness. But for this day Love bestowed on them such pleasure that they were perfectly content with their kissing and clipping, and the clasp of each other's arms, and such other pleasures that Love grants to those who know true love.

Besides this, they enjoyed going over the words that they had spoken, so that no man can know, no tongue tell, and no heart imagine the bliss that they had, for greater was there never, and however much I should say of it I could not tell you the thousandth part.

Guillaume did not forget the maids, for he begged them earnestly to remember him kindly, and gave them girdles and garlands and chains for their necks, and clasps and rings and pouncet-boxes full of musk, and other rich gifts which I omit, but all of them fair and fitting.

Each of them said:

"Fair Sire, all my desire is to do you honour and pleasure."

When he took his leave Guillaume could not help weeping, for he thought he might never see Flamenca again, and that was dolorous. But he was to see her, happy and soon, for Flamenca would come back to the baths as often as she wished, and often she would suffer from this pleasant indisposition which entirely eased and restored her spirits. At least iiii times a week she repaired, if possible, to the baths with more eagerness than she went to church to approach the saints.

But at their parting they both wept tenderly, mingling the tears of two hearts together, and drinking them. They really were a little unreasonable, but it was because their love was so pure and perfect, a love unknown to common clay, or to false, presuming gallants. I am sorry that I ever spoke of it, but it was so great that I could not help telling of it, but now, however, I will say no more.

When the moment came to say farewell they kissed and clung together and kissed again. They scarcely knew what they were doing, and the parting was so painful that they could hardly speak for sighs and tears.

But Flamenca did force herself to speak:

"Fair sweet courteous friend," she said, "I have given you no gift out of my wealth. Do you know why? It is because I surrender the whole gift of myself entirely to you."

She could not say all of this at once, but had to stop because her voice was shaken by sobs, but she struggled so that at last her lover understood what it was that she gave him, and then he thanked her, bowing down before her, and kissing and weeping and embracing her.

Then at last he managed to lift the stone. His throat was sore with crying, but that pain was nothing compared with the fear that his lady was suffering more.

Once back in the baths Flamenca did not stay longer than to wash her face a little, and then at once Margarida sounded the little bell, and the jealous husband came in such a hurry that he nearly fell when he was half-way there. He opened the door, but he could not speak at once because he had run so hard.

Flamenca said:

"These baths, Sire, are of very great virtue I must tell you. I shall be cured if I continue to take these baths, for already I feel a little better. But, as the writing here says, one bath is no use, but they are very efficacious if the number taken is the same as the number of days that the patient has suffered the disease."

"Well then, my lady, bathe here every morning if it eases you. I leave it to your choice."

Then Alis spoke up:

"Sire, she has great need of these baths, for no one could tell you the pain and distress, the anguish and the sweats that my lady has suffered to-day. There was a moment when we feared for her life, but now, thank God, we have found out for certain that the baths will cure her. But nothing else will do her any good."

That was what she said, the good intelligent girl, and Margarida did her part too, for she made Flamenca lie down on her bed for a little, as if to sleep and take some rest, and to suffer more at ease. But the joy of her love did not allow Flamenca to get much sleep.

"Lady," said Alis, laughing and teasing her, "how do you feel? Will you have dinner?"

Flamenca answered her as merrily:

"Dear Alis, was it not meat and drink enough when I held my dear within my arms? And do you think that in Paradise people care about eating and drinking? It is delicious food to me when I remember how he looked at me, sweetly and lovingly; such a gentle delight fills my heart then that it feeds and sustains me better than the manna from heaven which fed the children of Israel in the desert. I am so feasted and so jocund that my heart can hardly contain its joy in so narrow a space, and the only thing that I am hungry for is to see the man I love."

Just then the jealous husband came in.

"Lady," said he, "it is quite time that we had our dinner, if you please."

"Fair dear Sire, do not speak of it. I beg that you will not ask me to eat. But do you eat, if you wish."

At that he went out, cursing the hour that he was married, for since then he had not had one happy day. That was all he got from being jealous; and if he had not been so jealous he would not have been so unhappy, nor would his wife have had to feign illness, for she could have got all she wanted without; and so no one would have suffered.

But what was grief to him, to her was joy and delight; but as they say, "Who knows not, knows not."

Flamenca was so full of bliss that she hardly knew where she was, and presently she fell asleep. Then she dreamt that Guillaume was beseeching her for kisses and embraces. And she said aloud in her sleep, "Fair Sire, behold me here, at your will, in naught but my shift," and so slept in great delight till Archambaut came back.

Then Alis woke her up quick, and said in her ear:

"Lady, do not talk any more now about your lover, but get up, because my lord is at the door, and very upset about you."

"Dear, go and tell him not to come in because I am resting."

Alis did not need to be told twice, but went to the door before Archambaut could come in, and said:

"Sire, Sire, do not come in. My lady is asleep. Come back towards evening when she has rested, for now she is much agitated, and it is better to make no noise and to keep the door shut."

"You say well," said Archambaut, "and may this sleep bring her some relief."

"Yes, Sire, but go away now. I know it will be best for her, because now she will sleep a little, and after she will eat the better."

"That is true," said the old fellow, stammering and quite outfaced by Alis so that he had to leave the door and go away to his own place.

Flamenca made great fun of what he had said, and she could not help laughing, and made Alis sit down by her.

"Alis," said she, "tell me truly what you think of my lover."

"Will you believe me if I tell you?"

"Why, yes, if I choose, certainly."

"Then, lady, I will tell you. He is handsome and noble, and just such a one as you deserve. I never saw a man so comely, nor so courteous, nor so well bred."

Flamenca drew Alis to her.

"Dear, I tell you truly, I know no man like him. But each day will be a year for me until I can be with him again. Yet it is a great help to me to have someone I can talk to as I like about him."

"Sweet lady, tell me truly . . . [*do you remember*] how sweetly he kissed you, and how his eyes spoke of love?"

"Do I remember? God's Name! I do. You ought not to ask me such a silly thing, nor doubt that I should remember it. What else should I remember? I have now only to cut a reed on Saint John's day to prove if we both love each other with an equal love. We are both at the highest height of love, and both smitten with the same arrow. Our love itself cannot grow or diminish, but by our deeds we can show better yet how one heart unites us both. He is my love and I am his, so that there is no 'if' between us, and no condition. He may have me as he will, and when he will, and I will never say no to him, for it is bargaining and betrayal when a true lover is forbidden what he most desires. From this is born anger and grief and evil suspicion, and the ugly, foolish grievous word that is called 'no.' But God grant that there shall be no place between us for 'no,' because neither he nor I want that vile, proud word. There are some women who keep their lover languishing by their 'no,' and they are called pure and chaste for saying 'no,' but bad luck to the woman who denies with her mouth what her heart has said. These women seem innocent and pure, but their word is hard and cruel, and I tell you, my dear girls, that I do not want to be one of them. Rather I tell you that I do not know how I can do or say enough to please my dear knight, so as to recompense him even half as much as I ought for the distress he has suffered for my sake. No one else has taken this risk for me nor thought how to deliver me from weariness and set me free in joy.

"That woman who is stingy with her lover is a proud fool . . . . for all the kindness she can do him

is little indeed compared with the pain he suffers. And I pray God who made her that some day the man should not have his will of her by force, seeing that she is too stupid to change her mind and say 'yes.'

"On the other hand, a man can be too courteous, if, after he has made his petition, he waits for his lady's invitation; but let him, when time and place serve, confidently take what she neither gives nor refuses. He can put his case before her afterwards by means of some woman or maid, or some friend who loves them both well.

"I cannot understand that woman who, knowing that her lover is dying for her because he so loves and dreads her, makes no sign that she cares at all, though he cries aloud on her and God, and who does not even stretch out her hand towards him. She ought to be hanged by the neck like a thief for her wicked, hard, and foolish heart! The curse of God on such folly and such malicious pride!

"Beauty is a curse to a woman if she has lost mercy and pity and good sense and right thinking, for beauty passes but mercy dures. And so, as Ovid says, a time will come when she who now shows her lover indifference will be left alone, and old, and chill. And she to whom at night men have brought roses to lay at her door so that she may find them in the morning —she will have no one who will so much as touch her with a finger, however she may ask it. So, you young, fair, and cruel creatures who torment your true lovers, take heed of foolish counsel, and your lovers will still be true. . . . For a woman passes more quickly away than a rose, or the dew on a rose. A woman who holds her lover off, and who does not fear to fail him for the fear she has of her good name, falls into sin and error, for I know well that a true

lover will do more for his love than any other man in the world. Suppose now that anyone should wish to kill me; if my dear love could give himself to be killed so as to deliver me, then he would choose to die rather than that I should suffer shame and hurt.

"So that woman is like a silly child, who for fear of slanderers gives up loving him who, she knows, will do anything in the world for her so long as she is his. A woman should take courage against treacherous slanderers. Let them shout, let them do their will, thus will she soon vanquish them. A woman who loves well and truly must resolve that all the world may hate her, so long as, one day, she may have about her the arms of that one she loves, to do all his pleasure. That is my resolve, and so much I have learned of Love and of loving."

So Flamenca passed the whole day without eating or drinking, but when evening came Sire Archambaut urged her so that she did eat a little, for he said she should not go to the baths next day if she did not eat a little for his sake. So she ate a little in order to go to the baths.

Guillaume too was in great joy. All day he lay in bed and would have no one in his room who might speak to him and distract him from his happy thoughts. He sent word to the host and to Dom Justin the priest that he was not feeling well and that his complaint was so much worse that he would not be getting up that day, so he begged him to find another clerk for the day. He said, however, that he did not feel so ill but that Dom Justin must come as usual to eat and drink at the inn. The host gave the message correctly, because he was a man who knew how to carry out an order perfectly.

On Thursday morning Flamenca had not forgotten. She called her husband and said:

"Sire, what are you going to do? Will you go or will you stay here? I cannot do without the baths, for this pain will kill me. It has troubled me so all this night that I have not shut my eyes."

Said the jealous one:

"As God helps me, I know very well that you have had a bad night, so to please me eat a little before you go."

"Fair dear Sire, do not suggest it. It will do me harm, I know. I will dine at noon when I come back from the baths."

"Let us go then, since you are so eager."

He put on a rough coarse gown, and set out without any stockings on, to take her to the baths. He did not see that anything there had been touched in the walls, so most unwillingly he locked the door and went away as usual.

Flamenca was down there underground with her maidens, and at once they barred the door behind him, and hardly had to wait a minute before Guillaume entered very cautiously. He wore a gown of purple flowered with golden stars, which suited him so perfectly that it could not have been better. His hose were of scarlet samite. He came in, and directly he saw his lady made a reverence before her, and she did the same before him. Then she came to him and said:

"Dear, of whom I hold in fief my heart, and my body, and all that I have, you are welcome here."

"Dearest lady, whose man I am, God give to you and your folk whatever joy you ask of Him."

Both then held out their arms to the other, and kissed, and closely embraced. They did not, however, stay long in the baths, but went off to their stronghold, a pleasanter place and more desirable—I mean the room where they had sat the other day.

They came to it by the passage, and in it they found no lack of joy and bliss, but were freed there from their sorrow.

But Guillaume was a little uneasy, and Flamenca saw it and said:

"Fair friend, what are you thinking about?"

"My sweet lady, I should like to ask you for one thing, if it would not displease you, that I was thinking of last night."

"Friend, say whatever you like, for you can say nothing which, if you wish it, can displease me, whether it be good or evil, sense or folly, so only that it be your pleasure, for I give everything I have to minister to your will, and in nothing will I deny you."

"Then, my sweet thing, I have two cousins with me here, learning arms; their names are Othon and Clari. They are men of good birth and station, and I would like, if it pleases you, that they should know your graciousness. I have suffered anguish and sorrow and many perils of which neither you nor they know anything, but since now God wills that my state should be better, and since now all my portion is joy and happiness, I wish that everyone should share in it. My lads are young, courteous, and well-bred, good and comely. Your maids are the same. Now if those two were with these, they would have companions to take their pleasure with. And if they choose to love each other, they would love you and me the better for it."

"Fair sweet friend, certainly I will. Since you wish it so, have it as you please."

So Guillaume opened the door and had the two lads in, but when they saw the lady sitting on the bed they were astounded, and when they caught sight of the maidens they thought they were bewitched.

They at once knelt down on the floor before Flamenca and said, each of them:

"Lady, I will gladly do your commands. So now you have ii esquires."

Flamenca was very gracious to them, and welcomed them, and greeted them courteously. She took each by the hand, and made them get up from their knees, and said to her maids:

"Come here, both of you. These lads are two, and you are two, and I will that each of you has one of them for her own. Do not let him have to beg for anything, for I pray and bid and command you both that you do all that they wish. Now go out into the baths, where you will find no lack of delight."

"Lady, we accept your gift," said the girls, and then each led away her own. Alis had Othon, and Clari was Margarida's. Away they went to the baths to sport together, and there were pleasant fair chambers there from which, if they liked, neither Alis nor Margarida need come out a maid, for Joy and Love softly invited them to their play. And, since time and place were theirs, it would have been a shame, I think, to waste the chance. Anyway they could play at tables, and perhaps they did play at that; but however it may be, each of them was the richer by this, namely, that each now had a true courteous friend to whom they pledged their faith to be faithful and perfect lovers; for the lads promised that when they were made knights they would love no other lady, and the girls that when they were married women they would have no other knights. So their happiness was complete.

Meanwhile Guillaume was playing his game as well as he knew how, and he had found one fit to play against him, I can tell you, so that they two could play as they desired. But it is not for me to tell

the merry moves in that game; I will only say so much of it—that there is no play known to the hearts of lovers so sweet, whether it be of thought, word, or desire, that they left undone. They remembered how any pleasure omitted now would grieve them after, and so omitted none. And Love did courteously by them, for he would have no delay, and Flamenca loved so dearly that she would not play with her dear except on equal terms, and so he won everything. But before the game was over each had won all, and yet there was no anger or cursing at that.

Love himself gave them assurance that they should often play together at their leisure, but now he bade Flamenca go back, and stay no longer. So she, sighing, spoke to Guillaume:

"Dear," she said, "gentle and true, now it is time for me to go away. To-morrow, if God will, I shall come back. I will be here with you in the morning."

Guillaume could not answer a word, and thought his heart would break with anguish because she would leave him. But she comforted him very sweetly, and said:

"Dear, I promise you faithfully that to-morrow I will come back to you, and all day we will take our pleasure."

Then she kissed his eyes and cheeks, and met his look so sweetly that she drew all the pain out of his heart, for in that look Love gave him such joy that he was healed in every part. And it is natural that it should be so, for that joy which the eyes bring ought to delight the heart, since its power is so great that it can make two hearts live as one. . . . It is such a keen delight that there is no word which may perfectly express it, and it can only with great difficulty

be conceived by the understanding, though that can comprehend things not to be perceived by the ear or spoken by the tongue. Therefore I wish to demonstrate that this delight which reaches the heart through the eyes is greater than that which comes through the mouth, and purer and more perfect. I hope that now you understand how this is, but each ought to think for himself how best to put it, because, as I have said, there is no word which will express it entirely; but I will try once more to say it as in a shadow or similitude.

When two perfect and tender lovers look into each other's eyes with dear love, then, I say, such great joy passes inwards to their hearts that their whole bodies are strengthened and renewed by its sweetness. And the eyes, through whom this sweetness passes to be treasured by the heart—the eyes are so loyal that they keep nothing of it for themselves. But the mouth when it kisses cannot help keeping something for itself, before anything comes to the heart, and the kiss that the mouth takes is the assurance that each has that perfect joy that is the gift of Love.

I do not think I need say more, for every man who loves truly and is content to forgo all other delight save only innocent and chaste beholding, which is sweeter and more pleasant than I can express or any can comprehend, he, if he understands this, will agree with me and think as I do.

Those who may have kisses and all the rest at their pleasure do not care for trifles such as this, but there are some who should never forget the joy of love that comes to them by way of their eyes, and not by touch or kiss, for they know no more than this, which Reason and Mercy teach them—that kisses are the true seal of the joy that Love causes to pass through he eyes, and for this purpose he has made those doors

bright and clear and shining, so that in them he may look and see himself, when he comes in or out, and passes from one heart to another.

Love makes two hearts pass one into the other so perfectly that each one thinks it is slain if consent is refused, unless it can see love in the mirror whither desire leads—kissing, embracing, and clasping close, and enjoying such delicate pleasure that all thought or care is forgotten so long as it lasts.

Thus then the sweetness of Flamenca's look so delighted Guillaume that he had not even the power to tell her she must not go back to the baths, nor call back the girls and lads.

So these came back, very unwilling to return, but before they came Guillaume had led Flamenca most tenderly, with his arms about her, into the baths. The two lads came out then, and before they went away, they thanked Flamenca for the honour and kindness that she had done them.

She said, "Young sirs, how goes it? You have had the chance of a right good bathe. God keep you!"

Guillaume also took his leave, and when the two maids came to say farewell to him their eyes were red with crying. They thanked him heartily at once for the great joy and happiness they had had with his esquires, and from now on they would have no more sorrow and heaviness, nor would they think of the prison in which they were wrongfully confined, by reason of the joy that was come to them.

So iiii months went by—August, September, all October, and November to the feast of Saint Andrew By then, by God's mercy, Flamenca was so much recovered, so gay and so confident, that she cared not a straw for Sire Archambaut, and did not even get up when he came in or went out, and made no

show of caring a pin for him. He, fool though he was, noticed it, but he did not know the cause, so one day he said to her:

"Lady," said he, "it seems to me that you neither fear nor regard me. You have become very haughty towards me, I do not know why."

"Fair dear Sire," Flamenca replied, "they who married me to you did a great wrong, for ever since you had me your reputation has declined, and yet you used to have such a name that all the world spoke of you, and God and men loved you. But now you have become so jealous that we are both of us as good as dead. So I will make you an offer—I will swear to you upon the saints, in the presence of my maidens, that from now and for ever I will keep myself as safe as you have kept me; now take my hand upon it."

. . . . . .

[*Archambaut took her oath, and was glad. He forsook his jealous ways, and he summoned all his men and bade them to a feast.*]

Said he:

"Let Flamenca come to church with the women, and let the tenor bell be rung for the knights, and the great bell for the townsmen, and the little bell for the peasants. And when everyone has been summoned, do not then be so presumptuous as to come together again for a whole year. Now I hope that these customs will please you, and that you will all give your assent together."

Then all together they cried:

"So be it. So be it. We will have it so, and always will we maintain it so."

"Now," said he, "I have something else to say. At Easter time in the pleasant season I will hold a tourney here, and if I may I will have the King here

and all the barons of the kingdom that live between the tides of the two seas, and between the Rhone on the one side and the Garonne on the other. I wish to make a great feast in honour of the washing of my head, and that we should eat all together, for too long a time has passed since last we did that. We will invite all ladies to come, and for the whole day we will enjoy ourselves."

So on that day there was a great festival, and Flamenca was led out of prison. The knights were all eager to talk to her, either in company or alone if they could contrive it; indeed they would never have left her if it had not been for courtesy, and that they had pity on each other. All that day Flamenca could not, by hook or by crook, get to the baths, for she did not want to leave the knights among whom she sat. Each of these strove hard if it were only to see her, and if a man got a pleasant greeting from her he was quite overcome.

Next morning, as early as possible, she went straight to the baths. Archambaut did not go, for he had other things to think about, and he did not any longer want to be turnkey at the baths or porter of the tower. But as many as vii ladies went with Flamenca; not one of them went into the baths, but she asked them to return at the sound of the little bell, for she would be coming out again soon. Just for courtesy she invited them to take the baths, but they did not want to, and preferred to go away, because the waters of the baths had a strong smell, and no one who did not need to would take them willingly. So they went away, and at once the maids barred the door; they would not have had the ladies follow them if they could have chosen, for they kept them talking too long, so that they were even afraid that Guillaume might come.

But he did not; he was careful not to. Only when the ladies had gone, he did not delay long, but came into the baths and his esquires with him.

So they greeted and welcomed each other, and made it quite plain that there was no ill-will between them, for in a minute a hundred kisses were given and received. Then they went to Guillaume's chamber, and Flamenca told him how Archambaut had put away his evil habits and recovered courtesy.

"And therefore, friend, I will not have you any longer shut up here. Go away. I wish it so. For now I shall not be able to come here to you as I have done, and I want you to begone to your own country, and come back here for the tourney. And till then you shall send me messages by some intelligent pilgrim, or by a jongleur, telling me how you are, and what you are doing."

There was great grief at that. The maids and esquires went off quick into the baths, and there all iiii of them wept as if they had been whipped, and took leave of each other in every way they could, with kissing and handling and embracing obeying all that true love teaches.

Each of them asked the other for a token to keep for love's sake, and to be a remembrance of those promises made by word of mouth and confirmed by a thousand kisses, and written in tears upon their finger-nails. And just as it was written without, so also was it written in their hearts, and there would remain even when it was gone from their hands. This was that writing:

"Fair friend, remember me."

"On my honour I will, lady."

"Do not forget me, my sweet thing."

"Friend, I give you my word."

Guillaume too was so overcome that he sank

fainting into the arms of his dear sweeting, Flamenca. She did not know what to do; because of her love she did not want to leave him, and for fear she dared not call out. Truly she had plenty of time for tears, and she cried so much without stopping that those tears that rose from her heart and fell from her eyes bathed all his brow and chin and face.

"Friend," she said, "what ails you that you do not speak to me? It is not courteous that you should stay so long without speaking to me."

Guillaume heard her voice and her sobs, and his heart almost broke with sorrow. He was, however, in such trouble and shame that he had to struggle for a long time before he could recover, and then it was with difficulty that he answered her, for the sighs that came from the depths of his heart choked his voice. At last:

"When you tell me that you wish me to leave you," he said, "it is just as if you split my heart in two and slew me."

"Fair sweet friend," said Flamenca, "you are so noble, valiant, and courteous, and so wise that you understand well how all my intent is to serve and honour you. If ever you can think of a way in which I may do you greater honour, that will be joy to me, and I will do it gladly, so that nothing you wish may be left undone, be it wisdom or folly."

"Sweet lady, your worth and your wisdom are so great that you would comfort the unhappiest wretch in the world."

Then they kissed each other a thousand times, and said farewell. There was nothing lacking in their leave-taking except the hope of some assurance that they would be able to see each other again as before. But while they were together they omitted no delight, and they found some hope in the knowledge

that this year Easter would soon be here, though other years it might be very late.

At last they went into the baths, and Guillaume gave a little cough before they came there, so that the esquires should hear, and be ready to receive them.

Again they said farewell, with—

"God be with you always," and they would have liked that day to have been nearer to Christmas than January is.

I do not know which first turned away, but Flamenca, always gracious, spoke gently to her lover:

"Friend," she said, and kissed him, "with this kiss I give you my heart, and take your heart, which is my life."

"Lady," said Guillaume, "I accept it on those terms, and keep it in lieu of my own; and I pray you be careful of mine."

Then they parted, and Flamenca and her maids remained behind. They tidied and straightened their hair, and washed their faces well so that it should not be seen that they had been crying. Then, when it was close on the hour of nones, Margarida rang the little bell, and the vii ladies who were waiting for them upstairs in the square came down at once, and they all went away together. But Flamenca spoke never a word to woman or maid, nor did she wish to be spoken to. She was full of sorrowful thoughts, so that nothing pleased her, and whenever she tried to find comfort in anything, that comfort brought back the remembrance of him who was within her heart.

Lord Archambaut thought that love was the cause of this condition, and he was entirely satisfied that she was a most devoted wife.

Meanwhile Guillaume had all his gear folded and packed up. He felt now so completely cured that he

took a hearty farewell of his friends, and went off promptly, leaving so many broad gold pieces behind him, and so many fine hangings and vessels, that ever after the host and the priest were the richer by him.

He came to his own country, and heard there that there was war in Flanders, so he went thither with his meiny of three hundred good knights, and did there what he intended to do, for he won the prize of prowess before he came back, and that was all he went for.

As soon as Flamenca's father heard for certain that Sire Archambaut had recovered, and was no longer jealous, he came to see his daughter. He told them how Guillaume of Nevers was bearing himself in Flanders, and what spoil he had taken, and how he himself had seen Guillaume at the court of Flanders counted the best knight that ever was of any nation. This Guillaume was handsome and well-made, and already he loved tourneys, though he was so young that he had not yet finished growing.

So Sire Archambaut said:

"Then I know that we shall see him at the tourney, and I beg you, Sire, that you will tell him so, if you see him before I do."

"Certainly I will tell him, and it will be so, for I am sure that he will come, because we are good friends, and so I think that he will do as I say. And I will tell you this, on my honour, that if he is on your side, then anyone who likes can be on the other, for he has such a great meiny—full a thousand knights."

The Count talked so much about Guillaume that Sire Archambaut said that he would go and see him as soon as he got a chance, and that he longed to have his friendship, and that he would ask him to come to his tourney.

Not that it should have mattered a bit to Guillaume if Sire Archambaut had not invited him, but now he would have the honour of such a noble knight asking him for his help, and all in the name of friendship. In any case a tourney goes better when a man is friends with the husband, and that no one can deny.

So who now but Flamenca rejoiced to hear that her lover had no equal for prowess or comeliness?

The year went by until it came to the beginning of Lent. Then the Duke of Brabant made a tourney at his own castle of Louvain. It did not last long, but between the two parties there were quite iiii thousand knights there. Sire Archambaut was there, a stout fighter, and longing to recover his reputation; he came there so richly attended that he was acclaimed as among the best of all, for he had iii hundred good knights with him, all valiant and comely, with their coat armour and their barded horses, and all carrying the device of Sire Archambaut—yellow flowers on a blue field.

Archambaut found Guillaume of Nevers there, and at once joined his company. Guillaume received him very politely, and yielded to him in everything, showing him as much honour as he possibly could, and saying yes to everything he wished. They rode together to the tourney, and the whole field shook and rang when they came in armed. If any man challenged either of them he was counted a bold fellow, for when Guillaume lifted his hand against a man, neither cuirass, nor plate of steel, nor pourpoint, nor hauberk, nor gambeson helped him a button, but down he went to the ground.

Sire Archambaut also did well, and took knights and horses, but you must not think that he kept

them. He gave them away at once to anyone who cared to ask for them. Indeed, after Guillaume, Sire Archambaut had the praise and talk of the tourney.

He had his own tourney cried for Easter time, on the second of April, and he invited Guillaume of Nevers to be there.

"Surely I will be there," answered Guillaume, "and I will put myself on your side, because I wish to serve you in any way I can, for you know that I am your friend."

Then the tourney broke up, and Sire Archambaut and his brother-in-law Jocelin went back by way of Nemours. The Count did not grudge them a welcome, but called a fine court and great for them as he had done many times before.

Quite a week of Lent, I think, had gone by before Sire Archambaut came back to Bourbon, and there was great rejoicing when he returned. He told them of the great prowess and hardihood, the gifts, the chivalry, the gracious courtesy of Guillaume, and all that he had done at the tourney; and yet he could not tell it all, for that was impossible.

Then Alis, that quick, witty girl, asked about Guillaume of Nevers, as though she had never seen him, while Flamenca and Margarida listened.

"Sire," said she, "is he a lover too, this knight of so great prowess? For they say that knights like this do not know how to be agreeable, because they pride themselves so much on their strength that they scorn women's society and conversation."

"Is he a lover? God! yes, my dear little girl, and a better one than I. Any woman he deigns to wish for ought to consider herself well off. And so that you may believe me, and know how well he loves, I will show you a writing that I have in this pouch

which I asked him to write down for me so that I should know how he loved.

. . . . . .

And when you hear the love-songs written here, you will say that you never heard anything more courtly done."

Said Flamenca:

"Come now, fair lord, it seems that you wish to make love to Alis since you bring her verses and letters. But that love-making does not offend me; on the contrary I am glad of it, for I think that it will make you bring us new poems and rhymes and songs. I pray you recite this love-song to us yourself in my presence, for you will know best how to read it with expression, since you have read it several times already. Then, if the lines are as polished as you say, when we have heard them we will gladly pay you for them."

Sire Archambaut was very merry at that, and said:

"Lady, on my honour, the man who gave me this love-song begged me more than iiii separate times that I should not let them come into unworthy hands, nor allow any common creature to hear them, for they concern the Fair One of Beaumont, who is the fairest creature in the world, save you only."

. . . . . .

[*On the parchment there were*] two figures drawn so subtly and skilfully that they seemed verily alive. One was kneeling bowed before the other, and a flower issued from his mouth which reached to the edge of the verses. Touching this flower, and wreathed together with it, was another flower, that led to the ear of the second figure, and there Love, in the likeness of an angel, whispered the woman to listen what the flower said.

And now after this, I think, it will be no use

saying that Sire Archambaut is jealous, or that he keeps watch over his wife.

Flamenca looked at the love-song, and she knew that it was Guillaume as well as if he had knelt before her, and her own face and fashion also were as perfect as if she had been on the page herself.

So the three of them took the love-song away with them, and now they had something to play with. They studied the verses and learnt them by heart, and took very good care to show them to no one, and to let no one else hear a word of them. Often were those verses folded and refolded, but with great care, so as not to crack or injure anything in the writing or the picture. Every night Flamenca took them to bed with her, and kissed the picture of Guillaume a thousand times, and another thousand when she folded it, for whenever it was folded the two figures kissed each other—she had found out such a clever way of folding it that she could make them kiss each other. Often she would press it to her breast, saying:

"Dear, I can feel your heart beating in the place of mine, and therefore I hold this verse so close to it that it can feel the touch and rejoice with me."

Every morning when she got up she would look at Guillaume's picture and call softly on Love:

"Love," she would say, "although now you have set me so far from my lover, you will never tear my heart away from him, for he has it, as he said, in pledge. Nor shall I ever recall it, for if there is some delight of which he knows, but which I have not yet granted him, then if he will tell me what he wants, I will pledge my heart yet further. There is no joy a woman could give her lover that I would refuse him. You know that, and he knows it too, and there is nothing that I would not do from the beginning all over again, whenever I may see him. And I thank

you, Love, for teaching him to play this trick so sweetly that he has made my lord think he loves the lady of Beaumont, so that Archambaut will never guess whom he is really thinking of."

She talked too with Alis and Margarida about their lovers, but the time was long till Easter, and sometimes they were restless and forlorn. If it had not been for the love-song, Lent would have been altogether too long for them, and every day they said that it would never be over. And yet they had not made a bargain for which they would have to pay up on Holy Saturday.

Sire Archambaut was thinking of his tourney that was to be held after Easter. The brave Marquis of Montferrat had sent him a knife-hilt, with a sheath of silver and enamel. Sire Archambaut sent it on just as it was to the King of France, under seal, and begged him heartily to come to the tourney, for without him Archambaut would not have force enough. Also he sent messages in every direction so that no knight, however slothful, should stay away, from Bordeaux to Germany, from Flanders to Narbonne, there was no baron nor great lord whom Archambaut did not invite to come.

So after Easter, on the xvth day, there was a crowd lodged all about the town in tents and pavilions. Merchants came from distant countries with all their goods, and they occupied the hills and uplands. From all sides came in the knights, and great was the stir they made, and the to-ing and fro-ing, and the shouting and crying. They were divided into two parties, and I will tell you how. All the Flemings and Burgundians and Auvergnats and the men of Champagne and full a thousand knights of France were with Sire Archambaut. Against them were those of Poitou and Saintonge and Angoulême, the Bretons and

Normans and Tourainers with the men of Berri and the Limousin, of Perigord and Quercy. I cannot tell them all over one by one, but only this of them: that there were many there who would not have budged an inch from home if it had not been for Flamenca, but everyone was longing to see her, and thought that that by itself was a great honour. And so it was in very truth, for they could not have seen a fairer thing, nor sweeter, nor better fashioned, nor more gracious and pleasant, nor who knew better than she how to hold with her sweet graciousness all who saw or heard her. And the more they saw her the greater pleasure she gave them, so that they never grew used to her society; and that is the best gift a woman can have.

A great stage had been built in a gateway facing the field where the tourney was to be held, and looking out over the plain and hills, and there the ladies sat, and the lords who did not bear arms. One day before the tourney began, and before people had begun to bear arms, the splendid Guillaume of Nevers arrived, and saw how the valley and hills were crowded endlong and overthwart. He had a right fair company with him, for he had a thousand knights so fine that neither the arms nor clothes they wore had ever once been worn before.

Then you would have heard a hundred trumpets sounding, and more than a thousand horns from the place where Guillaume lodged in a wide fair camp near to the gateway; he pitched his tents there because when he saw the stage built there he knew that his lady would be watching from that side.

Sire Archambaut had plenty to do, for he must come and kiss this man and embrace the other, and salute another, and to yet another he would come

and say, "Sire, I would like you to lodge in the town, for I think you will do better there."

As soon as he heard of Guillaume's arrival he came to his tent, and when they saw each other they greeted and welcomed each other with great honour. Othon and Clari were there too, and as soon as Archambaut saw them he said:

"Young men, will you be made knights now or afterwards?"

"Now, Sire," they each replied, "if you please. We shall not say no."

So then and there Sire Archambaut himself belted on their swords, and gave them good horses and arms and gowns and palfreys saddled and bridled before he left them, and even then he told them that they must not think that they had received enough from him until he had given them some more. To Guillaume he said:

"Sire, I must, as I have promised, present you to my lady, if you please. So I beg you to come to her now."

In the palace the King and his barons were with Flamenca, and when Guillaume came in he and all the barons got up and welcomed him very kindly. Guillaume went straight to the King and addressed his lord with the greatest courtesy:

"Sire," said he, "I thank you, but sit down again. I have come to see my lady."

"Sire," the King answered, "I thank you. Then you must sit down beside me, Sire Guillaume," said he, "for she wishes it, and I concede it to you, because she is a woman who is quite able to entertain us both. But have you never seen her before?"

"Sire, I have heard high praise of her, and now I see that all the praise I heard, and more beside, is true."

Then the King said:

"My lords, you must not be displeased, but we have been here a long time, and those who have just come in wish to make their court in their turn, so now, if you please, we will leave them."

"Why, yes, Sire, willingly," said they all, and they took their leave and went out with a great deal of noise.

But when the King had finished speaking Flamenca could kiss her lover, and very softly she whispered:

"'He fishes on who catches one,' and a such kiss given in open hall is worth more than many secret kisses."

The King took his leave then and said:

"Lady, it would have been happier for me if Guillaume had never come, for I know that when you have talked with him even for a little while, you will forget that I was ever here, because he will please you so. But I commend you to God, for I want you to talk to him, and I know that you will make the most of this chance, for you are used to talking always with the valiant and wise."

So the King went, but Guillaume stayed, and Flamenca held him very tight by the hand with all the strength that love and desire gave her.

Then Othon and Clari, rather shame-faced, said:

"Lady, what shall we do?"

"You shall each receive a pretty, pleasant gift," said she, and called Margarida and Alis. "Go at once," she cried, "to my coffer, and bring me that roll in which the scarlet banners are. I want these two to have one each. I beg that you will accept them."

They understood then that she had given them the opportunity of talking to the girls at their ease, for

knights in court have nothing to do or say to the maidens so long as they can find women to their taste, and in this court there were more than a hundred such, and each of them very well versed in courtship and love.

Then Guillaume asked, a little fearfully:

"My sweet thing, how is my heart doing?"

"Dear, it lies where my own used to, and unless you cast out mine from the place where yours once was, do not think that I shall ever cast yours out. For my heart is in you, and likewise your heart in me in pure desire, and of our desire is made that bond that binds our two hearts together, and never will it break unless a strange desire should break it."

"Lady" answered Guillaume, "if my desire fails, or ever passes from you to any other creature, then may all the Saints and Saint Michael himself turn from my prayer whenever I have need. May I be as Cain, and you as Abel, if I should ever, for all that the world could give, consent that our hearts should be severed."

"Fair sweet friend," said she, "when are you going to Beaumont to see that lady who is so beautiful that all the world acclaims her the fairest?"

Guillaume smiled. "My sweet thing," said he, "that lady of Beaumont is so fair and good that I do not care two straws for her."

"Fair sweet friend, I knew it. I only spoke to prove you."

"But, sweet lady, what shall we do if we can only feed our love on words, and perhaps on a kiss so fleeting that it is hardly felt? Do you not know that desire is killing me?"

"Dear, do not be troubled. To-night you shall come to me again; do not bring too many folk with you, but bring Othon and Clari. Then, when no one

is watching, we can take our pleasure even better than ever before, for Sire Archambaut will be attending the King and the lords to their lodgings. Then I can promise you this at least: that you shall not have the like of that kiss which you complained of because it was so quickly gone, and you must be sure that if I may I will gladly do all to pleasure you for true love's sake."

So they talked happily of many things, satisfying their eyes and lips as well as they could, and what was left undone was not left undone by their choice, but of necessity, because this was neither the time nor the place for it. But they made their plans, and then Guillaume said farewell to all the ladies, one by one, commending them all to God, and each of them was as pleased with him as if he had seen and courted and made love to each one separately a thousand times over.

Othon and Clari thanked Flamenca for the banners and the embroideries that the girls had given them, but she said:

"I should thank you for accepting them. Come here again to-night if you will."

Sire Archambaut had been attending the King, and now came back again. He went with Guillaume to his tent, and afterwards to the place where the Duke of Burgundy lodged. He did everything he could to serve and honour his guests, and no one knew better than he how to do it.

After supper, when night came down, Guillaume did not rest, for his mind was set on going to his lady and he would not for the world have let sleep or the night steal from him such a bliss. When everyone else was taking off their clothes he put on a mail shirt under his scarlet gown, and hung at his belt a pointed knife, sharp and well tempered. He only

took with him xxx of his people, and so they started off through the great turmoil of men and horses and carts. All round you could hear so many Breton dances and tunes that you would have thought you were in Nantes where they make and sing them.

Coming out of his tent Guillaume met the seneschal of Senlis, who saluted him courteously, and asked:

"Sire, where are you going?"

"Sire, to the palace, if it please you."

"Shall I go with you?"

"Sire, no, for I think you must have duties to do about my lord the King, and I have enough company with me."

Now you must not think that Guillaume went on foot or without lights. Not at all. He and his people all rode on palfreys, and there were xxx great thick torches, each as heavy as one man could carry, burning before them, and each worth xx livres, and x or more flares besides. When they came to the palace they could hear the noise the jongleurs were making, and all the people, but when Guillaume dismounted they all hushed, and stopped their dancing, and cried:

"Welcome to the valiant, the noble, the renowned, the joy of the world! for his face is always merry, and his hands lavish and ready to give. Good luck to the woman who welcomes him to her side!"

The Count of Auxerre was sitting by Flamenca, his cousin, but when he saw Guillaume come, "Lady," said he, "I ought to give up my place to such a noble knight," so he got up, and said, joking:

"Sire, according to the rules of love, I will do you great honour, for I will give up my cushion to you, so that you may sit down by her. And besides that I have asked her favour for you."

"Sire, I thank you," answered Guillaume, and

came to his lady, and was well satisfied when she took his hand at once and gently drew him to her, and so adroitly pulled him down towards her that she could quite easily kiss him.

No one need wonder how, in such a noise, with one getting up and another sitting down to take his place, any woman of discretion, whom love and her heart prompted, should be able to kiss her lover once. She could do it easily, and why not? In such affairs a woman has a great advantage over a man, for a woman, if Love bids her, can do more in one short hour than a knight can in a whole day. I will tell you why this is so. Every right woman knows very well that her lover will not draw back nor run away from her lips if she wants to kiss him; but a man is afraid that a woman will hate to have him close, and will run away if he wants to kiss her, or snatch her mouth away, or take it all amiss. Therefore a woman is better at this art than a thousand knights; and so Ovid says, and he knew what he was talking about.

The palace was all brightly lit, partly by the ladies who came shining with their faces uncovered. But the fairest and the brightest light was there where Flamenca sat beside Guillaume; only she could not think how she might leave the feast and take him into her room, with only Othon and Clari beside.

While they were waiting in this way, Sire Archambaut came in quietly and without their knowing it. He came in so softly that no one saw or heard him, and this he did for courtesy, because he did not wish the whole court to stand up whenever he went or came. So no one moved then for him, nor could they have done, but when he had come in they saw him.

He went straight to Guillaume, but when Guillaume would have got up Archambaut laid his right

hand on Guillaume's knee, only he laid it there so gently that he did not feel the mail shirt under the gown. He put his other arm round Flamenca, and leaning over her, said:

"Lady, here is news for you. The Count of Bar, your cousin, and his brother Lord Raoul are to be made knights in the morning with x more of your cousins."

. . . . . .

"Sire," said she, "I can give them plenty of jewels, but I do not know how to choose which ought to go to which of them."

"Lady, surely, if he would do it, Sire Guillaume here, and Othon and Clari too, could help you to do that, for they know all about such things."

"Then, fair Sire, ask them to come into our room with us."

Said Guillaume:

"Lady, there is no need for anyone to ask me to do this thing or any other, for I would do much more than this for you and for my lord, if I only know what will please you or him."

So they went away to Flamenca's room, and she spread out on a fine big carpet jewels enough for a thousand knights, and so costly that every one was worth a mark, and a mark of fine gold at that.

When Sire Archambaut saw them he said:

"Lady, what a heap you have! Divide them as you like, but now I must go to the King's lodging. There are three of you women and three men, so agree among yourselves how you will share out your love-tokens." Then to Guillaume, "Sire," said he, "do not take it amiss that I go now, for I shall soon come back to you," and with that he went.

When he had gone Guillaume did not find it at all difficult to know which of the jewels to choose, for

close beside him there was a woman, fair and tender, white and delicate and lovely, so he took her most gently in his arms and there was great joy between them. Love and desire were their watchmen, and Margarida too was at the door; but she did not find the watching irksome, for she had with her Clari her dear.

So now behold how Love can prosper those whom he wills to prosper. But we will say no more of this.

Out of that room at last they came rejoicing, and all those who were in the palace sprang to their feet and did their best to welcome them, for no knight ever shows his grief or complains of love, any more than, for fear of slanderers, he refrains from courtesy and prowess, or from love either, when he gets the chance. Then Guillaume went away with his people but he did not omit to salute any man or woman before he came to the door of the hall.

Flamenca remained behind, most happy, for she thought that certainly she had done everything that she could do for her lover. In my opinion there never was any lady who dared to undertake such a great adventure, for, in full court, where nothing goes unnoticed, she had spoken with her lover and kissed him, and this in the sight of all—and yet no one was any the wiser.

Next morning those young nobles were knighted who had procured Guillaume such a great bliss, for because of them Sire Archambaut had actually presented his wife to Guillaume, and yet the wretched fellow knew nothing of it, for he trusted Flamenca's oath, and did not guess the sophistry she had used in it. The husband who thinks that he can hoard up his wife away from her lover, though he were more learned than Boethius, he is an ass, and a fool, and a numskull.

Next morning, when the sun got up red as if for shame, you could hear, after the matins bell, the sound of trumpets and horns and cymbals and drums and flutes—not shepherds' flutes though; these were to summon the assembly of the tourney, and to make the knights eager, and to excite the horses to rear and gallop. And so, what with the bells on the horses' harness ringing high and ringing low as some went by at a gallop and some trotting, there was, altogether, no small din. It was a pity then for the grass and the flowers, for they were all beaten and trodden down. And now, look you, the tourney begins.

Up to the stage went the King, and vii barons or so, and Flamenca with her maidens and many other ladies with her, and the barons who sat up there began to point out to them the devices of the knights that were carried on shields and helms and lances. Flamenca vowed that she would give her sleeve to the man who first jousted so as to bear down his man, and she had hardly spoken when everyone raised a shout, crying that she must take her sleeve from her arm, because the Count of la Marche was down, unhorsed and discomforted by Guillaume of Nevers, who had sent him from the field, and kept his shield and horse.

When Guillaume had taken the Count, townsmen came in at once from every side, asking to stand surety for him so that he might be set free, but Guillaume said to them:

"I do not want any ransom from the Count, but only that he should do one thing for me, if he will—that is, to go to the gate where my lady sits, and surrender himself to her as a prisoner." So he gave back his horse and arms to the Count, and he mounted, and pushed his way through the press, and so came to Flamenca. He went down on his knees

before her with his hands clasped like a captive, and, said he:

"Lady, I am sent here by that knight who is the flower of chivalry, and he bids me to surrender myself to you as a prisoner. But I have rich rents and moneys, and if you choose, you may have what you like of my wealth. If you will set me free you shall have what I can for payment."

"Lord," said Flamenca, "I am very willing to set you free, and so will he be pleased who took you, for he wished me to deliver you. But do this for me. Take this sleeve to him to bring him good fortune, and as a forecast of great happiness. For this morning, when I came here and saw the whole tourney before me, I vowed in the presence of my lord the King that I would give this sleeve to whoever should first in the joust unhorse his man. And since God willed that I should promise so, and that such a good knight should win it, there is nothing else you could do which should please me as much as this."

"Lady, I will do your message with a good will. And I tell you the truth—may God never let me stir from this place nor return to my own if I am not glad to have been overthrown (except if I could have overthrown him) just for the sake of being surrendered to you."

So he took the sleeve and went off with it, and no woman or maid could have folded it more neatly. He came to Guillaume, knowing that he came on a pleasant errand, and he saluted him:

"Sire," said he, "I bring you a gracious gift from my lady, who has delivered me out of captivity. She has sent this sleeve, and says to you that this morning as soon as the tourney began, she vowed in the presence of the King that she would give it to the first jouster who unhorsed another. And since it has been

God's pleasure that you should be the first to overthrow a knight, she bids me tell you that her heart rejoices, and of that this sleeve is a token."

Guillaume was not slow to take the sleeve; he unfolded it reverently, and put it at the back of his shield, fixing it into the strips of silver there, so that none of it showed except a little bit above the top edge. He did this so that he could see it himself whenever he wanted.

Fair Lord God, did ever man have such good fortune! I wot not. And who ought to love so dearly as he who finds no delaying nor nay-saying in his lady? There is nothing in the world to equal the love of a woman who is never weary of pleasing her dear, and who is always true to him, for that is a bliss above all others. But, just as a good woman is the best thing in the whole world, and the sweetest, and the most gracious, just so a wicked and cruel woman is the worst and bitterest, and the most harmful, and the meanest, and any man who has experience of her knows how little pleasure and profit there is in her. I know this much of wicked women; that they think of nothing but treachery, and that every day they find some means of saying no. This is a wicked and cruel thing, and the only remedy is that a man should care neither for rough nor smooth. For if a woman does not say yes when a man first makes his prayer to her, it will be no time for her to be saying yes when he has stopped asking her for anything. And she who is nay-saying when she is young will not be yea-saying when she grows old, for there is nothing that is not better in its youth than in its age. I am sure of this, that if beauty were like gold or wine, that grows better year by year, never would a man obtain mercy from a woman for all the pain he suffers. The most cruel woman will

have herself wooed and courted by hook or by crook, and if the wretched creature did not know how short her time is she would be all pride and denial of whatever a man asked. But beauty slips away swifter than a runnel of rain, which runs faster by than the stream which flows from a fountain head. It is the sober truth, that a woman's long delays serve no good purpose. She is thinking all the time how she may say no, and how continue in her folly, and it is very hard, as anyone knows, to lose the habit of such ill-humour. As Horace says, and he was not joking neither—a pot will not easily lose the flavour that it has first absorbed, and a vessel which is not kept clean will turn sour if you put anything into it.

But Guillaume had no cause to be downcast about his lady so far, for she had done all he wanted at the very first asking.

Then Count Alphonse, whom they called "of Toulouse," the best Count that ever was—he jousted with the Count of Louvain, whose name was Gontaric. Both were good knights, and they gave such blows that their shields were all broken and hacked; then they slashed the girths through, and the petrells, and down they went, both together. The knights all spurred to get them up again, hurling together and striking and unhorsing each other so that lances were broken and saddles split, and down came maces and down came staves. Swords struck at helms so that the swords were notched, and the helms dinted; never was there such an affray. Everyone did his best, for everyone wished to display his courage; but before they separated, Guillaume of Nevers showed them how such things should be done, for he took xvi Castilian horses, all saddled and bridled, and their riders, who had come to help the great Count of Toulouse; but they were taken, and he went his

way. Geoffroi of Blaye was one of these, he that never rode out fasting; and another was Arnaut of Boville, who did not like eels; and Uc of Rosinelle was another; the rest were all rich and great men of Castille.

Said Guillaume to them:

"Lords, do you wish to know how you may be free?"

"Why yes, Sire."

"Then go straight to my lady, at the gateway where you see the royal stage, and surrender yourselves to her from me, and I think that she will set you free."

"Sire, we thank you. We will do it."

Guillaume then gave them back their arms and horses and everything, and they went to the gate where Flamenca was laughing and enjoying herself with the King and his lords, who all said that this was a good tourney.

When they came to her they surrendered on behalf of Guillaume, and said:

"Sweet gentle lady, you who wear the crown of beauty, and to whom courage and valour bow as to the queen of all worthiness, Guillaume of Nevers, the courteous, who has taken all of us, sends us to you as a gift, to do whatever you will."

Flamenca laughed, and to the King she said:

"I think that in all these lords here I have got a good price for the sleeve that I took off my arm." Then to them," "Lords and knights, I do not want to keep you as prisoners, but I will have you all free. I give you up to him who took you; so you must thank him who both took and set you free."

They took leave of her then, and went to Guillaume, and gave him her greeting, and by that greeting his joy and his strength were increased.

Meanwhile Archambaut went through the field, glad when he found one ready to joust with him. He met with the Lord of Anduze, and he did not refuse his challenge, but each struck the other with such force that the shields split and the hauberks were torn, but neither was unhorsed.

Then the Count of Saint Pol went through the press, but before he knew what was happening, Lord Aimeri, Duke of Narbonne, came down on him at a great wallop, and they struck such blows that neither could keep his saddle, while the horse of each fell dead, for they had met breast to breast so strongly that their hearts were broken. From either side then the knights hastened . . . [*seeking*] how they might do such deeds as would make men talk of their prowess. Each party brought their own men off, and took many horses. There never were so many knights together smiting so fierce and quick, blow upon blow. When they were well breathed, and had hammered at each other enough, they drew apart to joust, for in jousting they could better show off how well and masterly they rode, and how well trained their horses were.

Guillaume of Montpellier jousted with Garin of Reortier, but the Burgundian could not keep his stirrups, so down he went to the ground. He could not get anyone to help him up either, but each side mocked at him, for he was a bigger man than Constantin, and the one who had overthrown him was a little fellow. But they did not cry so high but that he shouted above it all: "My lord, do you want any more songs?"

Gautier of Brienne jousted with the Viscount of Turenne; a very pretty joust. Each ran the iron of his lance through shield and arm and side, but no one would have known by looking at them, for both were so noble and brave that they made no sign of having

been touched; and yet they were so badly wounded that they could not bear arms nor go to another tourney for a month.

The Count of Champagne jousted with the noble Count of Rhodez. Each was a good knight, and they gave marvellous blows. Reins and petrells and the girths with their great buckles were all cut, yet neither of them drew back a step, but came down on his feet with lance and shield before his breast, as if he could joust on foot.

But now the King cried aloud:

"Lords, lords, no more! Let no man joust any more, for we have seen such a joust that there could not have been better."

Then you would have seen horses led back, and the captive knights brought to the lodgings; but among these were none of the knights that Guillaume of Nevers had taken; they were not roped or chained, nor had they to give surety, but they were set free only by saluting her who was the mistress of courage and worthiness.

Jongleurs and trumpeters were all sounding calls and war-cries, and the barons said among themselves, after supper, that they had never seen a tourney where there were so many good fighters, "but he who began the day, to whom my lady gave her sleeve —he bears the palm above all the others."

About the hour of vespers, when the sun went down, Guillaume, to whom Love allowed no rest, came to the palace to see his lady, for otherwise he could not be content. He was graciously welcomed by her, and he thanked her for the gift of the purple sleeve. They sat very close together so as to taste the sweet pleasures of kissing and holding hands, and this was enough, since each knew that the other would give everything if there were opportunity.

They went back to the tourney next day, and the King led Flamenca by the hand, and mounted up on to the stage. The Viscount of Melun, who rode a big brown horse, was taken by the lord of Cardaillac, and everyone was astonished, for the Viscount was easily twice as big and strong as the other, but it is the fortune of a good knight, that when Nature denies him strength and size, she makes it good in wit and prowess, and he is not a beggar outwardly who has good qualities within, and often one man is big who has not courage, and another is small but active.

The Count of Flanders went thrusting fiercely through the field, and found Geoffroi of Lusignan coming to ride a course with him. They gave each other such blows that they cut the shields to pieces, and slashed the pourpoint, and tore the mail coats, and rent the cloth almost to their flesh, so that they nearly went down.

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